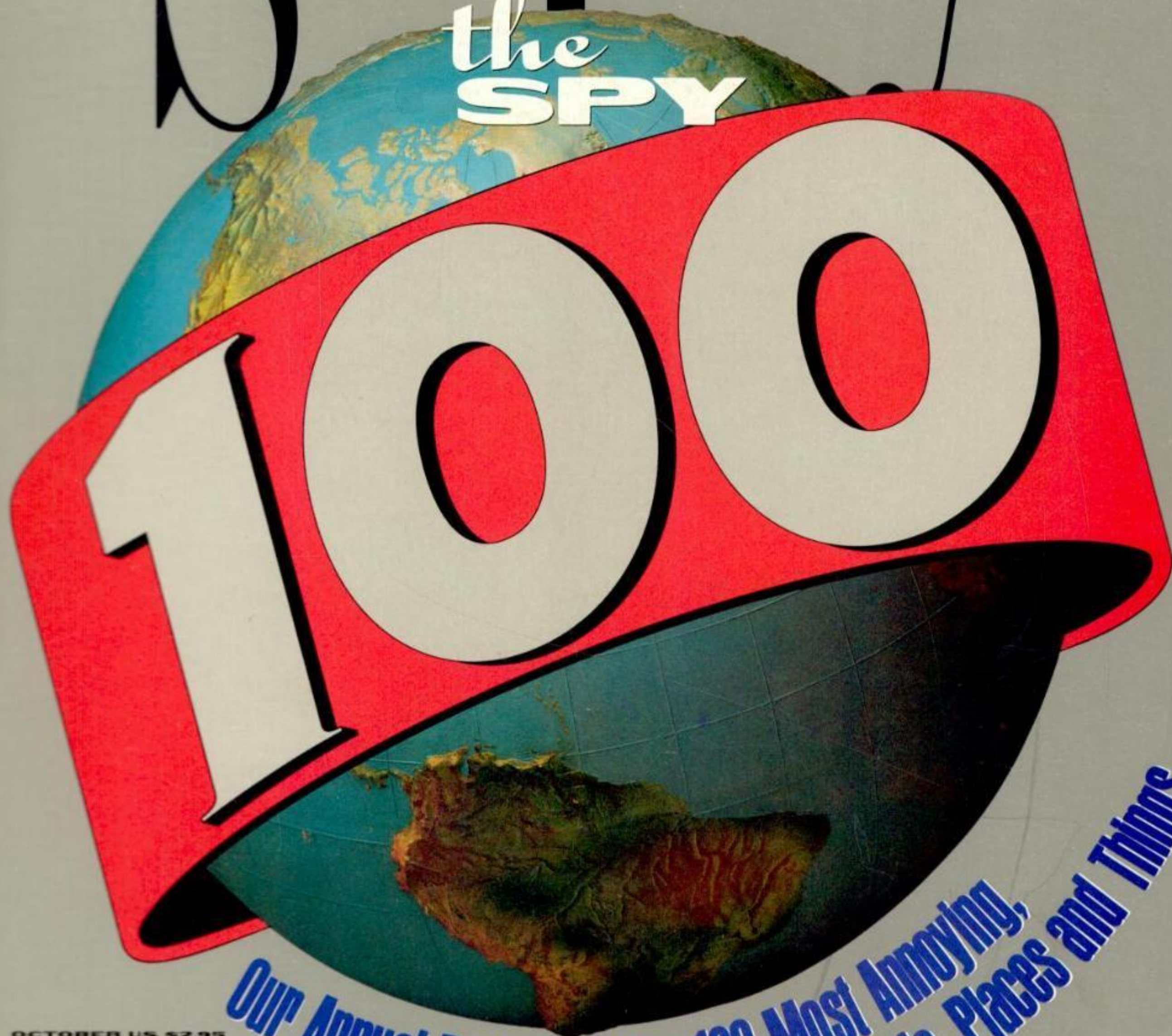


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Wigwag. Poses by David Byrne, songs by Suzanne Vega—the cultural landscape is littered with the droppings of the Faux Naïf. PAUL RUDNICK takes us on a whirlwind visit to the land of self-conscious artlessness, feigned vulnerability, artificial sweetening and a yearning to be mistaken for one of the Muppet Babies. You supply the Magic Marker freckles ... **66**



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1990


► HENRY "DUTCH" HOLLAND explains how readers can tell the difference between news and reviews in **Review of Reviewers**; and MARK LASSWELL chronicles recent doings at the zany, egregious Museum of **Broadcasting**, where the president is scraping egg off his face and old

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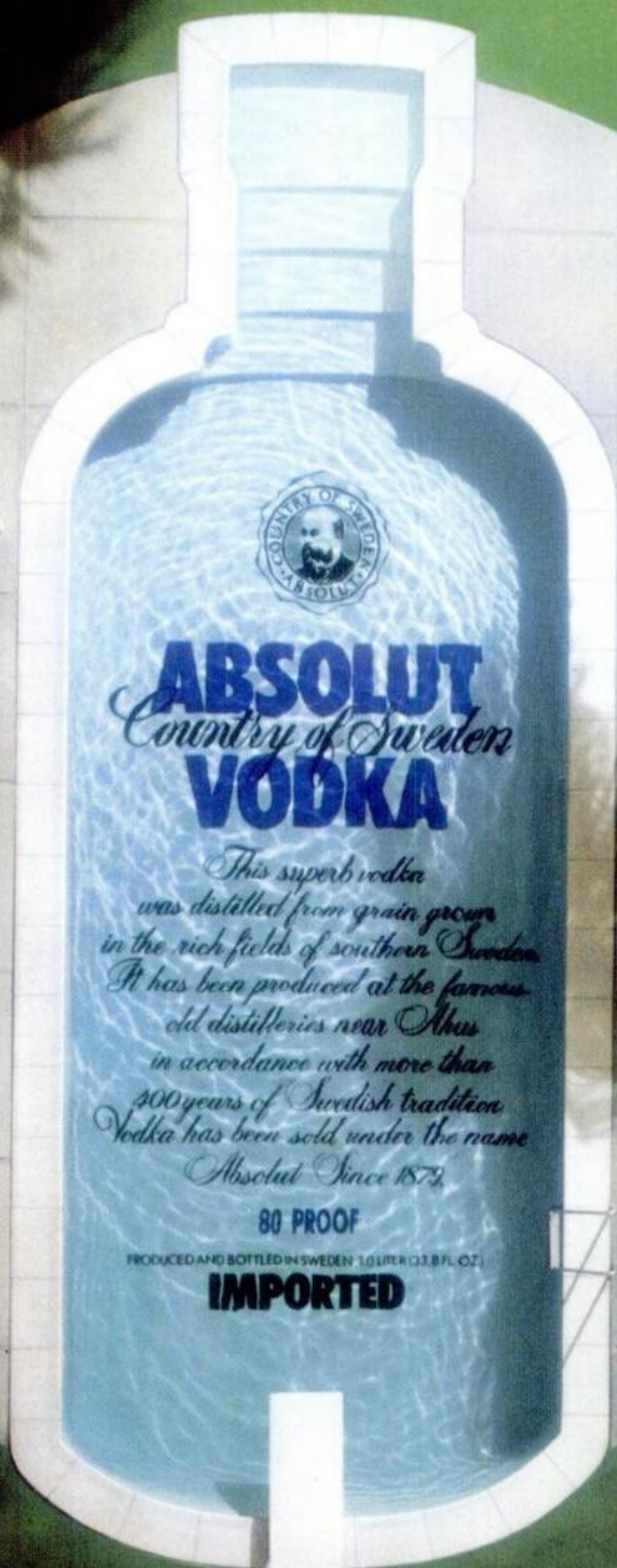
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Staff writer **HENRY ALFORD**, who stayed at five Manhattan bed-and-breakfasts for his story in this issue, is in no hurry to pass the night with any more strangers. "I'm only spending time with loved ones and business associates," he says. "And, of course, my imaginary friend, Mr. Kellner." Alford also writes about the Dalai Lama and celebrity headshots this month; his column, *Gracious Living*, debuted in our September issue and will appear again soon.



**DAVID KAMP** is the first SPY staff member to come up through the SPY farm system: he was an intern in the summers of 1987 and '88, joined the staff as an editorial assistant last year and was named a staff writer this spring. Kamp has thus been intimately involved with *The SPY 100* throughout its un-gainly four-year existence. He coordinated

## CONTRIBUTORS

this year's edition and is said to be working on a book, *Here at The SPY 100*. His assistants were interns **AIMEE BELL** (NYU, M.A., 1991), **DOUGLAS LANSKY** (Colorado College, 1992), **LAWRENCE LEVI** (Vassar, 1993), **MICAELA PORTA** (Tufts, 1990) and **MATTHEW TYRNAUER** (Wesleyan, 1991).



For the past two years contributing editor **MARK LASSWELL** has unsuccessfully been attempting to impress upon magazine editors the fact that he is a member of the United States Luge Association. While sitting by the phone waiting to hear the magic words *press junket, Innsbruck* and *You'll need to bring along several of your close friends*, Lasswell has written for SPY about Michael Coady, important people who need people and, in this issue, the consistently remarkable Museum of Broadcasting.



At the banquet of literature, contributing editor **PAUL RUDNICK** is dessert. In past issues of SPY Rudnick has written about practically all subjects, including Los Angeles and loathing high culture. In this issue he casts his gaze on the proliferation of *Faux Naïfs* in this, the 1990s. His novel, *I'll Take It* (Ballantine), came out in paperback this past summer; his upcoming play is called *I Hate Hamlet*. Rudnick has never lugged. 3

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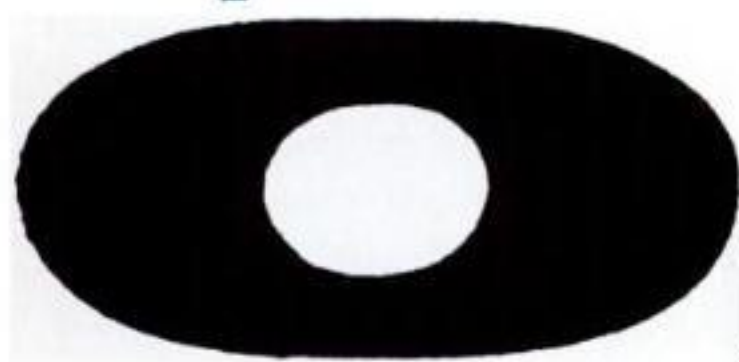
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"If we were going to plant a subliminal message on the record, I'd be saying, 'Buy seven copies.'" — Judas Priest's manager on the allegation that the



OKTOBERFEST IS OUR THING, AS WE'VE SAID BEFORE, AND THIS YEAR WE'RE ORGANIZING A DAY-LONG HUMDINGER OF A CELEBRATION (group sings during morning calisthenics, deutsche-mark exchange-rate symposia at lunch, automatic promotions for all blue-eyed employees) in honor of German reunification. Yes, it'll be just plain *Germany* again, shorn of those denaturing modifiers *West* and *East*: who'd have thought we would live to see once more a single, powerful German nation stretching from, well, *Poland*, all the way to, well, *France*? 🐼 Speaking of things that happened 50 years ago and alarming military spectacles (not that we're still sore about the last world war or anything; why, some of our best friends —



# Octoberfest is our thing

or, anyway, our book publishers — are German), McChord Air Force Base in Washington wanted to commemorate its 50th anniversary with pizzazz. So, according to an Air Force press release, it staged a "joint services re-enactment of the [December 1989] invasion of Panama [with] the actual aircraft, aircrews and soldiers who were there participating!" Leaving aside the question of whether it is legal for an official government document to contain an exclamation point, there was a senior Air Force officer who sounded thrillingly like a circa-1950 press agent. "I came up with the concept," bragged Major Morris Bedard. "They're calling me Cecil B. DeMille. I wasn't there [in Panama]. It was up to the fly-boys to restage the thing right." *The concept. DeMille. Fly-boys.* The stunt drew 125,000 spectators, although a backpedaling Air Force captain said it wasn't really a reenactment of the Panama invasion ("That got overemphasized in a news release"), and a backpedaling Air Force colonel didn't want to talk about it at all ("Somebody on base overhyped the event"), and Major Bedard was never heard

from again. 🐼 Organized pagentry to commemorate an event that happened seven months previously: at this rate of nostalgia acceleration, by Halloween we should be waxing sentimental about the good old days of the *early* nineties, before the recession and the war with Iraq. This is a baffling transitional moment, *Zeitgeistwise*, especially with the ever-more-inappropriate residues of the eighties



lingering in our midst. Marla Maples (whom Donald Trump recently called "good" as "a piece of ass") is unwilling to let the public fascination for her leech and dwindle, and so she recently provoked several hours of renewed attention by announcing that she may marry Trump. "This could be a story with a very beautiful ending," she said. Then, sounding even more uncannily like her boyfriend, she said she would not make the mistake her predecessor had: "I would never have signed [a prenuptial agreement]. That makes the relationship so shallow." We think she has it figured: not greed, but *an inability to abide shallowness*.

No, there is nothing quite so entertaining as watching eighties figures retrofit themselves—*Quick, honey, get me some plaid woolens and a pot of thick soup!*—for the nineties. Connie Chung, for instance, issued a statement announcing that she won't be doing her weekly show this fall because she is 44 years old and wants Maury Povich, her husband, to impregnate her on the double. In other words, she wants it to be a story with a very beautiful ending. This is what Connie Chung's press release said: "I now need to take a very aggressive approach to having a baby." Curiously, this aggressive new procreation strategy did not require Povich to abandon his daily TV show.

Having babies, pretending to forswear ambition, going green. Earth Day was the quasi-official debut of the nineties, of course, and although at first we were skeptical about its show-business-driven, self-congratulatory, here-today-gone-tomorrow quality, we've come around. A new environmental awareness has transformed the planet, and this could be another story with a very beautiful ending. Why, the *Exxon Valdez*, the very symbol of laissez-faire corporate swinishness, no longer exists. Yes, the ship was repaired; yes, it is about to be put back into service; but now it's called the *Exxon Mediterranean*—suggesting that if Mark David Chapman and Ivan Boesky would just start calling themselves Mark David Billingsly and Ivan Meier, all would be forgiven. Or at least forgotten.

The pundit consensus is that the nineties are going to be like the sixties, only boring—peace and love without the sex

and drugs. The sixties, however, were anything but recessionary. And this new recession is not merely a matter of unemployment and high interest rates: in the nineties everyone and everything suddenly seems too pooped to pop. People communicate in sighs and shrugs. Representative Lee Hamilton of Indiana, chairman of Congress's Joint Economic Committee, says that Americans "are getting along. But there is no spark left." "There is no blockbuster movie," says Dennis McAl-



pine, the Oppenheimer & Company entertainment-industry analyst. "Nobody's going to lose a lot, but nobody's going to make a lot. There's just a lack of general interest." Books are selling badly, and the three networks can barely manage to concoct one hit TV show between them.

In the 1980s *everything* was hot—Wall Street, advertising, the Knicks, the Mets, cable TV, architecture, magazines, Manhattan, real estate, restaurateurship, computers, Australia, Massachusetts, even Matt Dillon; in the nineties nothing is hot (except for the movie *Ghost*, which is a story with a very beautiful ending).

*Ghost*, plus unashamed racial hatred. Marla Gibbs, the black actress who played the housekeeper on *The Jeffersons* and now stars in an unwatchable show called 227, spoke at the recent national convention of the NAACP. "The Jewish system in Hollywood," she was reported to have said, "was not set up for us." Later Gibbs claimed she had been misquoted, but said she agreed with the misquote anyway. "I don't see that much wrong with that statement. When Jewish people constructed their television business, they did so to make money. They didn't have us in mind, and we wouldn't have had them in mind if we'd been doing it."

And the Chinese show business system probably doesn't have Marla Gibbs in mind, either: a firm in the People's Republic, it turns out, did all the painting and inking on Walt Disney's new cartoon movie, *Duck Tales*, during the post-Tiananmen Square crackdown. Is Disney embarrassed about the possible appearance of collaboration with despots? No way: "I think this kind of thing," says Bob Hath-

cock, the film's producer-director, "is what's going to beat that regime."

All right—*hopefulness!* Silly, naive, self-serving *hopefulness!* And there's still more good news: a new Pennsylvania law imposes rigorous standards on all college and university faculty members in the state. Starting this fall, every professor in Pennsylvania must be able to speak English, and speak it fluently. "The thinking is," explains the director of English-language programs at the University of Pennsylvania, "If I am paying for education, then I have a right for my professor to be at least comprehensible to me." Once again, our knee-jerk skepticism (we had figured all the get-tough talk about education for lip service) was misplaced. It's another beautiful ending in the making, at least for Pennsylvania.

Is not speaking English a bona fide handicap? Probably. The brand-new federal law that prohibits discrimination against handicapped people says that anything physical or mental that "substantially limits a major life activity" qualifies for protection. Being a crack addict, for instance, counts, as long as you are receiving treatment for it; specifically excluded, however, are kleptomania, compulsive gambling and transvestism.

Speaking of (acquitted) thieves, self-destructive daredevils and people who dress funny, Al Sharpton recently served a Rikers Island jail sentence for tying up New York City traffic during a protest demonstration. Imprisoned because of his struggle on behalf of black people: Sharpton equals Mandela. True, he served only ten days, and Mandela served 27 years, but as Sharpton says, "No jail time is easy when you are talking to a man who takes 100 phone calls a day."

It is a season of harsh sentences, all right. Ten days (and 1,000 missed phone calls) for causing a traffic jam in New York; three and a half years for killing a puppy with a butcher's knife in Florida (the dog had been tearing up the killer's yard); armed takeover for disagreeing about oil-production policy; a life sentence, of sorts, for secretly investigating a New York Yankee ("I found some aspects of his decision," baseball commissioner Fay Vincent said of Steinbrenner's refusal to accept a mere two-year suspension, "very strange"). George Steinbrenner forced into internal exile: as we have been suggesting all along, even this is a story with a very beautiful ending. ▀



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From the SPY mailroom: It's impossible to predict how readers will react to any given article we run. There appear to be no rules of thumb. Twelve-page features can pass without comment, while clue 17 Down in the crossword can result in a flurry of canceled subscriptions, new gift subscriptions or both.



The mail in response to our little check-cashing experiment ("Every Man Has His Price," by Julius Lowenthal, July) was... odd, by any standard. Again, it's not that we were expecting anything in particular. But we certainly weren't expecting what we got from David Ryan Walton or Wayne B. Yeager or Nick Agid or James A. Vacchiano, to name but four letter writers.

Mr. Walton, of Seattle, forwarded to us a check made out to him from the Enterprise Bank in Bellevue, Washington. "Dear Editors," he wrote, "I enclose your check in the amount of \$2.41. Nice try." Walton is either (a) kidding or (b) under the impression that we set up a legally incorporated company, opened a checking account and spent a great deal of time and postage to try to determine the comparative chintziness of Richard Gere, John McEnroe, Candice Bergen, Donald Trump, Woody Allen, Raquel Welch, Billy Joel, Cher, Faye Duna-way, Adnan Khashoggi and David Ryan Walton of Seattle.

Mr. Yeager, of Salvisa, Kentucky, sent us a 13-cent check, citing an unspecified and highly suspect "computer error."

Mr. Agid, of Rancho Palos Verdes, California, writes, "I have a project of my own. In which I send out stone postcards. Yes, postcards made of stone. Many of the responses are from famous people. Please write about this project! I have gotten some very funny responses. Walter H. Annenberg suggested *People* magazine. But I think SPY would be much better." Agid does include an impressive list of people he says have responded to the stone postcards. Nevertheless, we're with Annenberg.

Mr. Vacchiano, of Philadelphia, although he had never previously heard of SPY, was moved to share with us a brief reminiscence of checks for small amounts he has got over the years. "In 1975 I received a check for \$1 from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania's state treasurer's office," he writes. "I saved it and the envelope, for

DEAR EDITORS In the final sentence of "The Mystery of the Instant Mogul" [by Edward Jay Epstein, June], you say that "...Time Warner's flagship magazine, *Time*, ran a cover story raising fears of a foreign invasion of Hollywood following Sony's purchase of Columbia Pictures..." Unfortunately, you're accusing the wrong magazine. *Newsweek* ran a cover (October 9, 1989) with the headline JAPAN INVADES HOLLYWOOD; *Time*'s cover that week was about the problems of adoption, with Sony's Akio Morita as the second billing. *Time*'s story on the Sony-Columbia deal, headlined FROM WALKMAN TO SHOWMAN, took a relatively benign view of foreign takeovers. It is regrettable that you confused two publications that treated the story so differently.

Stephen Koepf  
Senior editor, *Time*  
New York

*Time*, *Newsweek*... who can tell them apart?  
SPY nevertheless regrets the error.

DEAR EDITORS Your "Zeitgeist-probing" piece "Inside Everything: The Modern Mania for Knowing More Than You Need to Know About the Way Everything in the World Works" [by Vince Passaro, June] is five years late.

Though you guys *think* you are on the cutting edge of things, the really avant-garde observations on "insideness" and

"outsideness" are in a book by an obscure University of New Hampshire professor named Joshua Meyrowitz.

I am referring to *No Sense of Place: The Impact of Electronic Media on Social Behavior* (Oxford University Press, 1985). Meyrowitz not only identified most of the trends Passaro talks about, but he also explained why they were happening. The book has been called "brilliant," "luminous," "masterful," "profoundly original" and all that stuff.

Those of your readers who thought Passaro was onto something deeper than just a passing fad should turn to *No Sense of Place* and find out about it.

John G. Maguire  
Quincy, Massachusetts

*We don't know the book; Passaro hasn't read it, either. But it sounds brilliant, luminous, masterful and profoundly original.*

DEAR EDITORS In the spirit of "Inside Everything," I'm curious to know why on the June 20 episode of *The Tonight Show* Roy Blount Jr. wiped his hand off after shaking hands with Phil Hartman of *Saturday Night Live*. The impression I got was that the ostensibly more literate Roy regarded the affable Phil as a "second-class talent." Was this in fact the case?

Jeff Mold  
Montour Falls, New York

Roy Blount replies, "The gesture had nothing to do with Hartman's talent, which I regard as at least (and my impression was that Hartman would give me no argument here) as enormous as my own. Surely Mr. Mold is not such a rank outsider as to be unaware of the traditional talk show ritual 'Pass the booger.'"

DEAR EDITORS Regarding your report on Tommy Lasorda, "Talking Motherf---ing Baseball, Godd-- It! SPY Salutes the Tardy 1990 Baseball Season With a Piece of 13-Year-Old, Unauthorized Oral History" [June]: I sure would like to see the outtakes from those Slim-Fast commercials.

Jane McCreery  
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

DEAR EDITORS I really enjoyed Seth Roberts's article "Lab Rat: What AIDS Researcher Dr. Robert Gallo Did in Pursuit of the Nobel Prize, and

## LETTERS TO SPY

What He Didn't Do in Pursuit of a Cure for AIDS" [July]. I'd like to let your readers know how *common* such a warped personality as Gallo's is in academic medicine these days.

It is the *rule*, not the exception, for the lab chief not to have done any "hands-on" research for years. Many times he or she doesn't visit the lab at all! Nevertheless, the chief's name always gets tacked onto anything published from the lab—not at the end of the article, but as an author. It's a standing joke that many chiefs of service haven't read the articles in their own curricula vitae!

There are a *lot* of brilliant people in medicine. Too bad it is often the brown-noser or backstabber who makes it into the history books.

John L. Graner, M.D.  
Hines, Illinois





the simple reason that it was the lowest monetary amount I had ever received in a check. (Never cashed.) Then, lo and behold, in 1987, 'Bell Telephone of Pennsylvania' goes one better, a check in the amount of \$0.02, never cashed for the same above reason." Vacchiano then suggests we "strike while the iron is hot" and hold "a nationwide contest for nonmillionaires for the lowest amount check never cashed."

Cynthia Miller of Orinda, California, has thoughtfully sent us the photo reprinted below. Although the quality of the print is poor, the terrifying figure at left (low-cut dress, black stockings, black gloves, pearl choker) can be positively identified as SPY's publisher, Thomas L. Phillips Jr., distinguishing himself in some amateur theatrical production in his younger days.



He couldn't believe we'd run it, either.

Rod Pennington of Cincinnati has mailed us a *Cincinnati Post* column, by a man named Nick Clooney, that we would hate to have missed. Something about the column's headline—SCUM JOURNAL'S "TWIN" PARODY MEAN-SPIRITED—suggests Nick Clooney is living with a lot of pent-up resentment. (In his accompanying note, Pennington explains that the freelance columnist is the brother of singer Rosemary Clooney, as well as the former host of an almost-instantly-canceled TV game show and a former fill-in news anchor.) After railing against morning TV for a few paragraphs, Clooney zeros in on SPY's highly offensive new book, *Separated at Birth? 2: The Saga Continues*.

"Some of the pictures are mildly amusing," he allows. But most of it, alas, is, "like the magazine, pure trash." And away we go. Take a step back, all of you, if ►

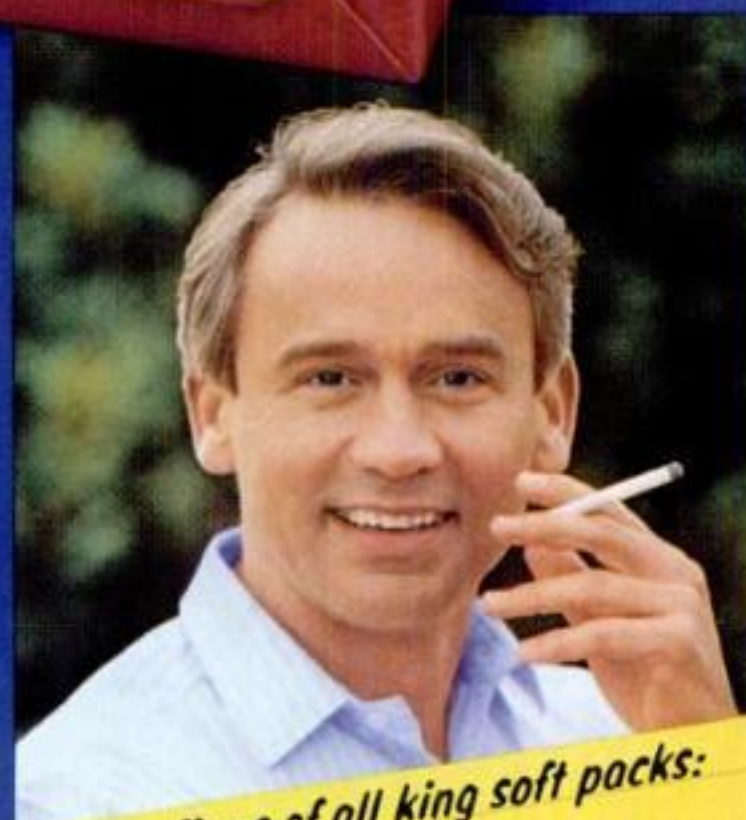
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CHERYL KORALK

DEAR EDITORS If Dr. Gallo is denied the Nobel Prize, we will have you, John Crewdson [of the *Chicago Tribune*] and Randy Shilts [*And the Band Played On*] to thank. And we will.

Jalaine Madura  
Seattle, Washington

DEAR EDITORS It's about time we faced the fact that we're never going to have real progress on AIDS until we give all that research money to people who care as much about those who already have AIDS as they do about maintaining a wall of protection around the straight world. If it weren't for Gallo's blood test and the false hope it gives straights that they can stay forever shielded from AIDS, we'd have everyone, even those who have the lash with the Bush administration, vociferously demanding a cure for this abominable disease.

I cannot include my name, because I'm not altogether out of the closet yet and I don't want anyone outing me until I've prepared my parents, so I'll understand if you can't print this. But you are probably going to take a lot of heat for exposing this pseudogod, and you should know there are plenty of people like me out here who appreciate your courage.

Name withheld on request  
Long Island, New York

DEAR EDITORS Something smells fishy. It seems in the photos accompanying July's "Every Man Has His Price—In Some Cases, 13 Cents: A Mortifying SPY Experiment in Comparative Chintziness" [by Julius Lowenthal] that Mr. Trump's 13-cent check, dated November 6, 1989, was actually cashed on September 21, 1989, nearly six weeks before it was even issued.

Could Mr. Lowenthal actually have altered his data in favor of another cheap shot at popular SPY target Donald Trump? Unlikely. Or did Mr. Trump, in an act of incredible miserliness, actually travel back in time approximately six weeks (as suggested in the August 1989 SPY article "For Starters We'd Kill Hitler, Buy Xerox at 8½ and Save the Dinosaurs") and deposit the check at his local bank? If so, perhaps Mr. Trump is far shrewder than we ever anticipated. A few hundred trips back in time and suddenly Mr. Lowen-



that's 13 cents is a tidy sum. You got a better explanation?

Rick Gitelson

Los Angeles, California

*As a matter of fact, we do. Several other readers spotted this simple error, which was a result of our photographing the back of Trump's 64-cent check rather than that of the smaller one.*

DEAR EDITORS **W**hen I saw Cher on your July cover, I bought your magazine. After I read the "cheap" story, I was disgusted. Instead of playing games with celebrities, why don't you do something credible? I'm sure Cher signs hundreds of checks each week and the amount of each is meaningless. Spend your time helping us get relevant data, not foolish drivels.

Bruce Gelly

Cambridge, Massachusetts

*It's always a pleasure to hear from people who collect Cher memorabilia. We recommend keeping the issue in a clear plastic bag—mint condition enhances resale value every time.*

DEAR EDITORS **B**y accident I taped the first TV reports of President Reagan's shooting in 1981. I wanted *Another World*, but what I got was this:

Live from the White House—NBC News's Judy Woodruff reporting: "I was standing outside the Washington Hilton when the shooting started. We had just come out the door in a big hurry, as the press normally is after the president is leaving the place where he's made a speech and is ready to go back to the White House. We had started to walk towards his limousine to ask him some questions, but we noticed that the Secret Service, that some of the press-office agents were rushing us along, and we didn't really get very close, and at about that point I was probably one car length and a half away from the president's limousine when the shots were fired. People immediately hit the ground, and I noticed *there were some shots fired from an overhang, from a sidewalk that was above where the president's car was.* [Emphasis mine. Judy Woodruff is pointing upward during this part of her report.] I looked immediately to see if the president, if I could see the president. I couldn't. I couldn't tell whether he had just been pushed into the car, or whether..."

you don't want to be doused. "SPY magazine is among the parasite press that makes its living by prying into peripheral private matters and parodying the accomplishments of those who have the temerity to do something," writes Clooney. (Remarkably enough, that was almost precisely the wording we originally had in mind for the magazine's slogan back in 1986—"SPY: Among the Parasite Press Prying into Peripheral Private Matters and Parodying the Accomplishments of Those Who Have the Temerity to Do Something." It didn't fit on the cover, though, so we settled instead for a more prosaic "The New York Monthly.")

How offensive is that book of look-alikes? We checked to see whether Clooney's sister was perhaps included, and she was. Only she's paired utterly benignly, with ABC reporter Lynn Sherr. Call us self-delusional, but even the epithet we chose for Clooney—"singer"—doesn't seem inordinately vicious, no matter how many times we say it. We'd like to believe Nick Clooney was just having a bad day, and to prove it we'll even give him some free publicity when *SAB2* is reprinted, and use his endorsement on the back cover. You know: "'Mildly amusing'—Nick Clooney, *Cincinnati Post*." Or maybe just "Amusing." That's if the longer excerpt somehow doesn't fit. It's happened before.

SPY's praises are being sung from Cincinnati to Hong Kong. Amy Lavine of Chicago sent us something she found in the *South China Morning Post* while on vacation—a story on *Dick Tracy* and Disney Studios credits SPY's "scathing but often accurate gossip columns." Why, thank you. Thank you very much. That exact phrase was also, incidentally, rejected long ago in favor of, yes, "The New York Monthly."

Arms folded, grinning, contributing editor Guy Kawasaki looks out from the photograph atop his monthly column in *MacUser* magazine. Why his arms are folded is a mystery, but we know why he's grinning: he has just stolen another idea from SPY and made his job that much easier. Kawasaki, in consecutive issues of *MacUser*, has given readers a playlet about a power struggle at Apple Computers, complete with cut-out characters and proscenium arch (see "Speed-the-Play," by David Ives, November 1989); a revealingly anno- ➤



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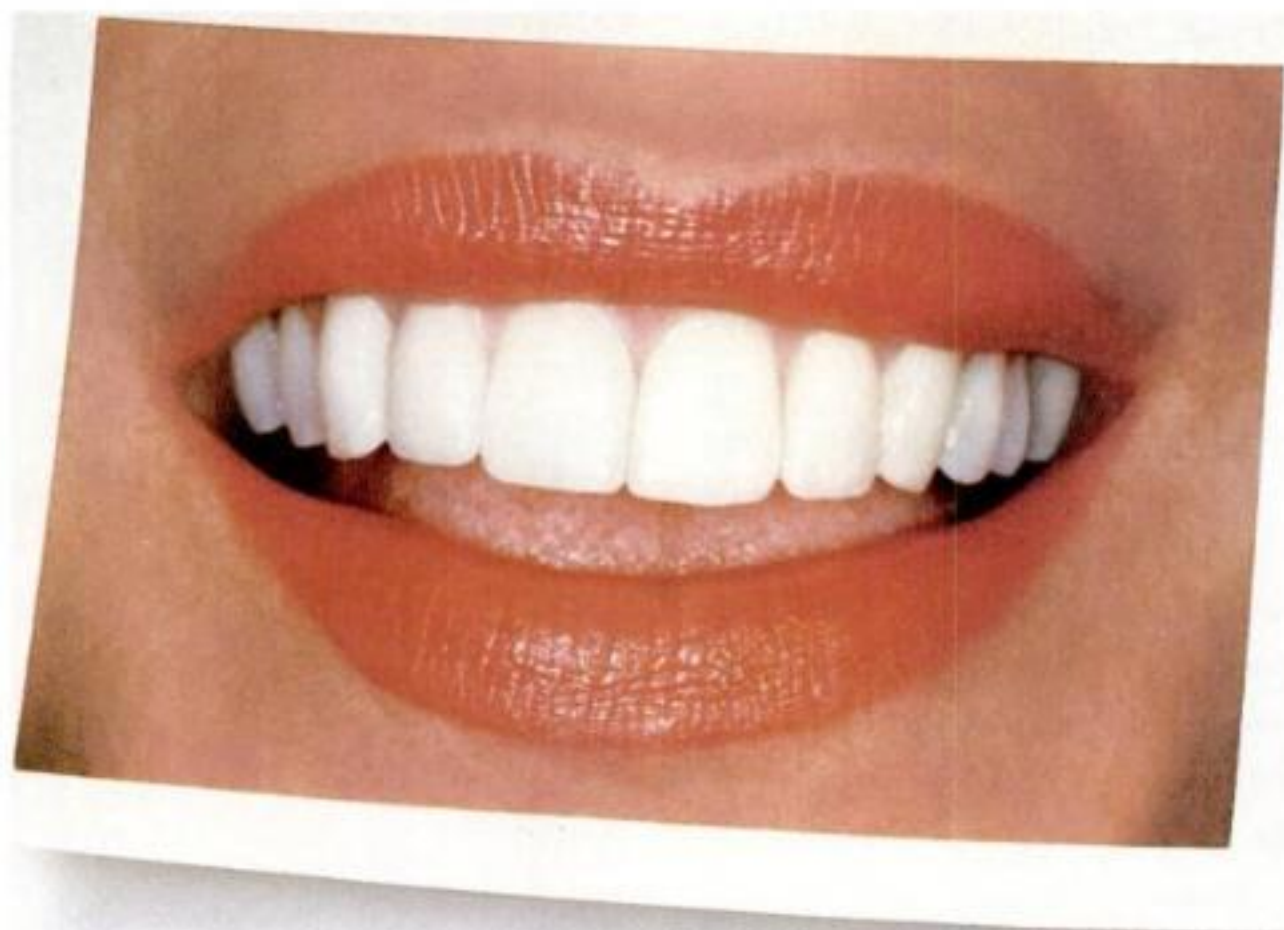
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Voice of Roger Mudd: "Judy, Judy, I'm sorry to interrupt. I beg your pardon. In front of me now are two bulletins from AP and United Press International that both say President Reagan was shot in the chest." After some time, the coverage returns to Woodruff, who again points upward as she says, "I suppose there were six, seven, eight, shots fired, and one of those shots I know at least came, I believe, from a *Secret Service agent who was stationed overhead* near the roof of the hotel."

That was all I'd heard about a shot from above until I read in "Coincidence? Perhaps: Wading Into the Terrifying, Seamless World of Conspiracy ~~Nuts~~ Theorists" [by George Kalogerakis, July] that a John Judge claims Reagan was shot from above, which you chose to put in italics to indicate, I suppose, how outlandish you thought the idea. Woodruff makes it somewhat less outlandish, don't you think?

I still have that tape, but I don't have a copy of the next week's issue of *Time*, in which the shot that hit the president was explained, as I recall, as having ricocheted off the limousine before hitting him! There was even a drawing with the path of the "ricocheting" bullet shown, in an attempt to describe a path that could not otherwise be drawn from the gunman to the president's upraised arm.

Of such moments are conspiracy buffs made—when all I wanted was some soap-opera unreality. Perhaps that's what I got.

*Bernard Zamkoff  
New York*

*Disturbing evidence indeed. (But any more disturbing than your admission that you were trying to tape Another World?) Incidentally, the issue of Time you mention was actually an issue of Newsweek. (But who can tell them apart?)*

DEAR EDITORS **R**egarding [Mormon-centric] conspiracy theories and Brent Scowcroft: today Utah, tomorrow the world!

*R. W. Rasband  
Heber City, Utah*

DEAR EDITORS **T**hank you for your article regarding dress codes in corporations ["Green Ties Mean Pink Slips!: True-life Button-down Tales of the Corporate Fashion Police State," by Cate Plys, July]. It has been my contention that business suits are the Garan-



imal-wear for adults, where you match the tag of one animal with the tag of another and you've completed the look. What I find more appalling, however, is that when our company has the occasional dress-down day, they provide us with company sweatshirts, so that it really does look like our uniform. (Maybe things would be different if Taso Lagos were our president.)

Andrea DeCou  
Seattle, Washington  
Who?

DEAR EDITORS In the July Great Expectations column you made a potentially dangerous factual error concerning the Florida gubernatorial race. You see, not only is Lawton "I'm Not a Burnout Anymore" Chiles a Democrat, but so is Bill "I Never Was a Burnout" Nelson. Those two were slugging it out to see who will face incumbent Republican Bob "I'm Not a Vampire, but I Play One on TV" Martinez. The Florida public is already confused enough—please don't make it tougher on them. I certainly hope your error did not drive any Floridians to suicide, mass murder or habitual drug use.

Daniel E. Katz  
Gainesville, Florida

DEAR EDITORS David Shenk's piece on 200 unfilled federal jobs ["Bush's Surprising Plan to Cut the Federal Payroll," July] implies that our life, liberty and pursuit of happiness are somehow diminished by fewer bureaucrats' writing memoranda to one another. Au contraire. Proof of the nonessentiality of those slots is that despite the prolonged vacancies, necessary government functions continue.

Henry David Thoreau reminded us that "that government is best which governs least." The hundreds of "senior executive positions" are part of a huge welfare program for upper-middle-class policy analysts, academics and consultants who feed at the public trough. In the interest of economy in government, the slots should be eliminated from the personnel allowances of the bureaucracies named by Shenk.

Seth Roberts's article on Dr. Robert Gallo gives a perfect example of the

tated official document, in this case an Apple press release (see *SPY* passim, or for that matter *Harper's*); and a column called "Reviewing Reviews." If only we could find something to steal from *MacUser*.

"Is it just me, or were all the gross points in your July issue made by residents of Grosse Pointe, Michigan?" asks a reader from Manhattan, citing Grosse Pointer Robert A. Brooks's reference to nubbin-size testicles and Grosse Pointer Domenica F. Marchetti's thoughts on breast-feeding in public. "P.S. How many readers do you have in Grosse Pointe?" Forty-eight, but it seems like thousands.

Belated congratulations to Evan S. Nadel, 1990 salutatorian of St. Andrew's School in Boca Raton, Florida. *SPY's* clipping service noticed a brief profile of Evan in the *Boca Raton News* in which he quite sensibly listed *SPY* as his favorite magazine. The high school's valedictorian, who shall remain nameless, selected *Life*.

A follow-up: Ved Mehta, the prolific memoirist whose presence at *The New Yorker* continues to be felt (see "Slaves of *The New Yorker*," by Jennet Conant, September 1989), is Yale's first Rosenkranz Writer in Residence. Congratulations are in order. Thanks to Catherine Scott of Hamden, Connecticut, for sending us the article in which Mehta says of the appointment, "I feel that I have at once been sprayed by the fountain of honor and given an opportunity to dip into the fountain of youth.... I can't think of anything more stimulating than contact with young minds." Come on, Ved—you're not trying.

Finally, as Karen Briner so unnecessarily put it, "Gentlemen, start your engines—Issaquah, Washington, is back in the mailroom!" ☺

#### C O R R E C T I O N S

In August's Great Expectations, published before the late Mitch Snyder killed himself, we stated that Snyder planned to marry a 15-year-old; in fact, the relationship, not his girlfriend, was 15 years old. In "Valley of the Quasi Celebrities" (August), a photo caption misidentified the painter of Nikki Haskell's Warholesque portrait. It was Kurt Hoppe. And junk bond issuer Geothermal Resources International Inc. did indeed file for bankruptcy protection under Chapter 11 (The Junk Bond Tote Board, June). ☺



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Washington, D.C.

*Actually, Mr. Fairchild, it was John L. O'Sullivan who first said, "The best government is that which governs least," in 1837. (Thoreau, O'Sullivan... who can tell them apart?)*

DEAR EDITORS I have found a lot in your magazine very funny because much of it is about the questionable choices adults have made out of stupidity, greed and/or arrogance, but you are unfair to include innocent children in your jokes about their parents. In May you ran a Private Lives of Public Figures illustration of "the Quayles at home" that made the vice president's children look like idiots, and July's Party Poop section includes a photograph of Tim Robbins's and Susan Sarandon's new baby, or, as you put it, "love child." Why is it that these two beautiful words together describe someone who is at once undesirable and in some way at fault for his/her own creation? And whoever writes your Party Poop captions must not have any children, or he/she would know that the only way one arrives *anywhere* with a baby five months old or younger is by bearing said child in a car seat. Nothing "curious" about it.

It is hard to imagine how these young ones might have affected you in some way in the past, but unless they have, please leave them out of your attempts to make fun of their parents. Just about the only thing I really admire about Quayle is the way he has kept his children, whom he could have used to improve his image, out of the spotlight. You should, too.

Susan H. Borghese

Birmingham, Michigan

*We hadn't intended to make the vice president's children look like idiots — they were supposed to be wholesome and normal and fun-loving; Marilyn was the subject of that illustration. We weren't faulting Robbins's and Sarandon's baby for his lack of legal legitimacy. And between them the editors of the Party Poop section have two infants, one toddler and two small children whom they positively dote on, and they are adamant about the fact that the whole car seat doesn't have to go with you — that the base can be left behind, seatbelted into the car, and the seat itself removed.*

DEAR EDITORS I absolutely roared as I read Eddie Stern's description of Annie Sprinkle's *Post Porn Modernist* performance ["Who Says Corporate America Plays It Safe?," July]. If Annie's underwriters would sponsor me, I'm sure I could develop a show equally enchanting and profound.

Ken Warner Jr.

Binghamton, New York

DEAR EDITORS I'm surprised some members of your staff didn't feel uncomfortable about the Sprinkle piece, as it plays right into the hands of the Jesse Helms "See what kind of smut/trash/subversion your money is paying for" school of arts-funding entitlement.

SPY crossed the line in this piece from nothing-sacred satire to neocon commentary. In the current, precarious arts climate, the potential for damage inherent in such a piece far outweighs its minimal and cheap (i.e., easy-target) humor.

Barbara Middlebrook

Astoria, New York

*It did give us concern. But then, so does popular-front-ism.*

DEAR EDITORS Regarding the Infant-in-the-Bistro Incident [see *How to Be a Grown-up*, by Ellis Weiner, April, and *Letters to SPY*, July], I can't believe that the editors of a publication that has described babies as "small people who smell bad and don't care" need Ms. Siebenhoven to shed light on why she seems so bitter. Here are people who have perpetrated their population explosion and expect to be congratulated for it wherever they go. After all, the parents have a little Weiner to cuddle; the rest of us just get higher taxes, more overcrowding, more air pollution, more water pollution, more sewage to dispose of, more solid waste...

Ms. Siebenhoven is not bitter — she is reasonably and righteously outraged.

John Winslow

Maplewood, New Jersey

*Over to you, Susan Borghese.*

SPY welcomes correspondence from its readers. Address correspondence to SPY, The SPY Building, 5 Union Square West, New York, N.Y. 10003. Please include your daytime telephone number. Typewritten letters are preferred. Letters may be edited for length or clarity. ♣



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Time (RCA) 01027

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Hits (Warner Bros.) 33779

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(Fontana) 33653

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(Mercury) 00516

Aerosmith: Pump  
(Geffen) 63678

Technotronic: Pump Up  
The Jam-The Album  
(SBK) 34781

Tommy Page: Paintings  
In My Mind (Sire) 60184

Lisa Stansfield: Affection  
(Arista) 34198

James Galway: Greatest  
Hits (RCA) 73233

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(Sire) 01029

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Emmylou Harris: Trio  
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## THE USUAL SUSPECTS



B. STREISAND A. HADEN-GUEST H. KISSINGER

## THE FINE PRINT

by Jamie Malanowski

### GEORGE BUSH, THE HERMAN'S-WORLD-OF-SPORTING-GOODS PRESIDENT

The last time we looked at an official report of the gifts that had been given to the president of the United States, Ronald Reagan held that office, and the gifts seemed fairly appropriate to Reagan and his wife. Typical gifts were riding tack, equine figurines, jewelry, photographs of the first couple—in general, objects they could use in pursuit of activities they enjoyed: riding, looking good, staring at pictures of themselves. Fittingly, while the gifts that have been sent to President Bush are quite different, they seem appropriate, too; most of them seem to be the sort of things a goofy, Dagwood Bumstead-ish dad gets on Father's Day. The following items constitute about 80 percent of the gifts given to the president.

Bush received **a cap** and 2 pairs of running shoes from a woman in Oregon; **2 caps** and 2 sweatsuits from Boston University president John Silber; **24 caps** from a man in Syosset, New York; **47 caps** from a man in Virginia; **a helmet** and a jacket from Jerry Jones of the Dallas Cowboys; **2 neckties** and a watch from the Aga Khan; **3 neckties** ▶

**BARBRA STREISAND** CHOOSES her projects very carefully; it has been three years since her show-offy star turn as a nut in *Nuts*, and only now has she rededicated herself to film, this time as the producer-director-star-despot of *The Prince of Tides*, an adaptation of **PAT CONROY**'s novel that her ex-boyfriend **JON PETERS** is paying her to make for Columbia Pictures. Streisand's on-the-set demeanor suggests that the *Nuts* magic has yet to wear off: Not too long ago she chewed out her staff because her trailer was inappropriately equipped. The problem? The motor home's toilet featured an awkwardly placed flush handle that in the cramped trailer required its user to pivot around and risk experiencing a glimpse into the bowl. Under Streisand's maniacal orders, plans were drawn up—at considerable expense—to remount the flushing mechanism so that she would be spared the apparent trauma of turning around. Alas, even this proposed solution failed to satisfy Streisand, who as producer is nominally responsible for keeping the film within budget. She finally decreed that thenceforth her underlings find and rent her *houses* near various shooting locations—the main criterion being the grandeur of the houses' bathrooms.

EVEN TWO-TIME SPY Celebrity Pro-Am Ironman Nightlife Decathlon champion **ANTHONY HADEN-GUEST** occasionally wearies of the demimonde, and when he does, nothing hits the spot better than a weekend spent freeloading at a friend's country house. It was on one such sojourn recently that the very, very important journalist and author endeavored to join his host's children as they floated in inner tubes down a New England stream. One child, spotting a glint in the stream's bed, dived under, retrieved a quarter and held it up excitedly for all to see. At that point Haden-Guest, a man renowned on both sides of the Atlantic for his extreme frugality, said in all seriousness, "A quarter? Oh, I think that must have fallen out of my pocket!" and took the coin from the little child.

THE TOAST OF TODAY'S black-tie circuit is one **HENRY KISSINGER**, a sometime political consultant and full-time funster with a **WALTER MONHEIT**™—like flair for perking up even the most solemn occasion. Witness his antics in July, when at the dedication of the Richard Nixon Library & Birthplace in Yorba Linda, California, he too-heartily corralled attendees such as **H. R. HALDEMAN** and forced them to pose with him, all smiles and handshakes, before the paparazzi. But for all his social savvy, Kissinger is still occasionally singled out for his expertise in foreign policy—remember, he *was* once secretary of State!—and asked to comment on current goings-on in the world. In one such instance recently, a daily-newspaper reporter telephoned the great thinker to solicit his opinions on some pressing geopolitical issue. As Kissinger and the reporter exchanged pleasantries the former asked the latter, unprovoked, "So, are you talking just to me, or to other war criminals as well?"

BRITISH PUBLISHING MINIMOGLU **HERBERT LIPSON**, recognizing that his six-year-old *Manhattan, inc.* had lost its will to live, acted as any loveless parent would: he gave his baby away. Last June, *Manhattan, inc.* was engulfed by **JOHN FAIRCHILD**'s fashion-publishing empire and promptly merged with the aristocrat-manqué men's magazine *M*. While some of *Manhattan, inc.*'s editorial staff declined to have anything to do with *M, inc.*, as the curious hybrid is called, editor **CLAY FELKER** managed to persuade a few employees to transplant themselves. Realizing that they too were a bit skeptical of working for a sister publication of *Footwear News*, Lipson—who retains the title of *M, inc.*'s chairman—promised the staff members that their credibility as savvy, stylish, hard-nosed journalists would not be compromised. "Don't worry—I can push **MICHAEL COADY** around," he said, referring to the infamously difficult man who runs Fairchild's magazines. "And I can push John Fairchild around too!"





## TAKE ME OUT TO LA SCALA



**E**ver notice how it's always either baseball season or opera season and yet, without a calendar, it's nearly impossible to tell which is which? After all, baseball and opera are both nineteenth-century star vehicles masquerading as team sports; they're both enjoying a new voguishness; they're also the only two events that anyone will listen to on the radio, which in itself is remarkable, since both are three hours long and move at a glacial pace. And don't forget: *neither is over until the fat lady sings*. Hmmm.

Fortunately—especially for those who would be mortified to get their dates wrong and end up wearing a Mets cap to The Met—there are a number of subtle yet telltale distinctions:

BASEBALL	OPERA
Pitchers, hitters and utility players	Sopranos, tenors and chorus
Batting practice	Scales
The major leagues, the minor leagues, Little League	Grand opera, light opera, New York City Opera
It's good to pitch a perfect game	It's good to have perfect pitch
Sid Fernandez	Luciano Pavarotti
You get to stand up during the seventh-inning stretch, when thousands of people sing "Take Me Out to the Ball Game"	You get to stand up during intermission, when, mercifully, no one sings anything
Doubleheader	<i>The Ring</i>
Mostly male fans (who frequently say rude things about Darryl Strawberry)	Mostly male fans (who frequently say catty things about Beverly Sills)
Don Mattingly	Don Giovanni
Baseball cards	CDs
"Yea!"	"Brava!"
"It's not boring; it's like ballet"	"It's not boring; it's like Jackie Collins"

—Leslie Brenner

## PRIVATE LIVES OF PUBLIC FIGURES



Michael Jackson chats with some friends from out of town.

ILLUSTRATION BY DREW FRIEDMAN

### WHAT'S IN A NAME?

*Our Monthly  
Anagram Analysis*

**BUSH: READ MY LIPS  
RULED BY MISHAPS**

**SADDAM HUSSEIN  
SMASH SAUDI DEN**

**ASSOCIATE JUSTICE  
DAVID H. SOUTER  
ADECISIVE, JUST A  
SHADE TOO RUSTIC**

**TRUMP TAJ MAHAL  
JUMP THAT MARLA**

**ANDREW DICE CLAY  
DARE A LEWD CYNIC**

—Andy Aaron

### THE FINE PRINT CONTINUED

from Representative Sonny Montgomery of Mississippi; **4 neckties** and a robe from a couple in San Francisco; **5 neckties** and a scarf from Lionel Hampton; **6 neckties** (as well as a jogging suit, a jersey, 3 golf shirts, 2 pairs of shorts, 2 pairs of running shorts, a T-shirt, a tank top, 6 paperweights and 24 lapel pins) from a doctor in Daphne, Alabama; **8 neckties** from a man in Hicksville, New York; and **22 neckties** from a couple in Little Rock.

He got **a sweatsuit** from a woman in New York City; **a sweatsuit, 3 shirts** and 6 pairs of socks from Digger Phelps of Notre Dame; **2 sweatshirts** and **11 T-shirts** for the Bush grandchildren from a woman in San Mateo, California; **5 sweatshirts** from a man in Indianapolis; **a sweatsuit, a warm-up suit, a jersey**, a game ball and assorted hats and **T-shirts** from Isaiah Thomas and William Davidson of the Detroit Pistons; **5 T-shirts** and **a sweatshirt** as well as 3 caps, 3 emblems and a license plate from somebody in Duxbury, Massachusetts; **19 T-shirts** from a woman in New York City; **jogging clothes** from a man in Tuscaloosa; **a sweater** from Ralph Lauren; and **2 dress shirts** from a man in Ohio.

He got **a pair of tennis shoes** from a man in Boston; **a pair of tennis shoes, a pair of jogging shoes** and a sweatshirt from Bjorn Borg; **3 pairs of sport shoes** from a man in Maine; **a pair of cowboy boots** from a couple in Houston; **a pair of cowboy boots** for himself and **11 pairs** for his grandchildren from a man in Nocona, Texas; and **a pair of waders and wading shoes** from a man in Jackson Hole, Wyoming.

He got **a tennis racket** from a doctor in Dallas; **a tennis racket** from a man in Washington; **a tennis racket**, along with a tennis bag, 6 balls, a cap, 2 towels, a thermos, 2 copies of a magazine, 2 books and a notebook, from a



THE FINE PRINT CONTINUED

man in Barboursville, West Virginia; and a pair of tennis shorts, a shirt, a sweater, 2 pairs of tab shorts and some sweatshirts from Representative Bill Archer of Texas. He got a fishing rod and reel from a man in Miami; a rod and reel from a man in Hampstead, Maryland; a rod and reel from somebody in Summerdale, Alabama; a rod and a hat from somebody else in Garden Grove, California; 2 rods, a reel and a box of flies from two men with the same last name in Sidney, Nebraska; 5 rods from two men without the same last name in Houston; 2 tackle boxes filled with fishing flies from a man in Eufaula, Alabama; and a fishing vest, a casting shirt, a pair of wading shorts and 2 caps from a man in Portland, Oregon. He got a putter from someone in Orlando; 3 woods, some irons and a dozen gloves from a woman in Illinois; some woods and irons from a guy in Albany, Georgia; a golf club, 2 caps, 6 video-cassette tapes and 11 golf shirts from Lee Trevino; and 5½ dozen golf balls from a man in Chicopee, Massachusetts.

He got a cup and saucer from Happy Rockefeller. He got 3 books from a woman in Ontario; 10 audio books from a woman in New York City; and 12 audio books from another woman in New York (what — the *Strand* doesn't buy reviewers' copies of books on tape?). He got a pair of WE THE PEOPLE cuff links and 25 copies of a book about the Constitution for his grandchildren from Warren Burger, who no doubt has a lot of that sort of stuff left over from the big constitutional-bicentennial celebration he ran a few years ago.

YOU LAUGH, BUT SEE IF CBS DOESN'T MAKE A SERIES ABOUT AN ANIMAL SWAT TEAM

October 17, 1989, 8:04 ▶

To devoted SPY readers, the saga of Taso Lagos is all too familiar. Taso, who lives in Seattle, has been one of our...well, most devoted readers. The saga of Issaquah should also be all too familiar. Much of our mail in the early days came from that little town in Washington—every second postmark, it seems now. We wondered what would happen if we brought these two vital forces of the Pacific Northwest together. Issaquah. Taso Lagos. The one demanded firsthand investigation; the other was simply demanding. In Hollywood this is known as a "package." At SPY we call it an "assignment." We're still not sure whether we made the right decision, but for better or worse, here is Temporary SPY Correspondent TASO LAGOS reporting on Issaquah.

The town sits in a pit at the base of three mountains, ironic since one of its citizens' chief employers is an unsightly gravel pit. Just off I-90, the hamlet of Issaquah (16 miles east of Seattle) is a hotbed of SPY letter writers—and a microcosm of rural America, only more surreal. Normally respectable people, for example, dress up as chinook salmon for "Salmon Days," in costumes that original Issaquah SPY letter writer Michael Korolenko describes as looking like "giant condoms." More than 200,000 people congregate in Octo-

ber to celebrate the return of the salmon to the town's leading tourist attraction, the salmon hatchery, and steal a glimpse of Mother Nature's reproductive cycle.

Human eroticism is another issue. Especially if it takes place during a sabbath. Another letter writer, actress-singer Jennifer Simonds, recounts how at a cast party of a children's-theater production one actress refused to go swimming in Lake Sammamish because "it was Sunday."

Excessively religious? Slightly repressed? You be the judge. This is, after all, a community that has ten churches (for a population of 7,100) and is near the most renowned "honeymooners'" destination in the Northwest, Salish Lodge, overlooking the picturesque Snoqualmie Falls (as seen in *Twin Peaks*). Gracious manager Loy Helmly wouldn't venture an estimate of how many children have been conceived there: "I've only been here two months."

One hapless tourist fell to his death after slipping on the wet grass trying to get a better photograph of the falls. "You think of these things as dreams you describe to a psychiatrist, but they actually happen in Issaquah," Korolenko observes.

Perhaps he means nightmares. Lake Sammamish State Park is where Ted Bundy picked up two of his earliest known victims. From be-

ing victimized by Bundy to writing letters to a New York-based satirical magazine, the town seems to be electrified by publicity. Simonds says, "It's rare that a small town gets mentioned in a national magazine, so everybody wanted to have a hand in it. They were finally on the map; they were important."

Issaquah is also the home of the Lutheran Bible Institute. Tammy Person came here to "walk with Christ," but many of her classmates have other ideas. Referred to by knowing locals as the Lutheran Bridal Institute, the college is, according to head

librarian and bookstore manager Irene Hausken, "responsible for 13 marriages this year!" This despite the strict rules that forbid kissing in public and closing dorm-room doors when guests are present.

At Rainy Day Books, owners David and Ruth Ann Getchell claim the residents ("Not Issaquah-ees, but farmers!") are extremely well read. "We sell lots of books on philosophy, religion, history....Penguin Classics are really popular," Mr. Getchell says, then adds, "Most people here are underemployed and prefer it that way. They have time to write letters." ☺



## THE SPY TRIP TIP

High-Concept Washington State Edition: Inside Issaquah

## LOGROLLING IN OUR TIME

"As I read these stories, my heart changed the pace of its own beating. I know of few writers who write so movingly about children and parents in their mutual darkness, mutual need."

—Frederick Busch on Richard Bausch's *Spirits and Other Stories*

"A writer of great and generous gifts....A brilliant and loving book."

—Bausch on Busch's *Harry & Catherine*

"I romped right through it....It's like reading next week's newspaper."

—Russell Baker on Herbert Mitgang's *The Montauk Fault*

"He's not a humorist; he's a terrorist—the best since Mark Twain, H. L. Mencken and S. J. Perelman."

—Mitgang on Baker's *So This Is Depravity*

"Gripping and compassionate."

—Anton Myrer on Thomas Fleming's *The Officers' Wives*

"A tidal wave of a book."

—Fleming on Myrer's *A Green Desire*

—Howard Kaplan



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# THE SPY LIST

# SEPARATED AT BIRTH?

THE FINE PRINT CONTINUED

p.m. EST: If you were like most of us, you were ambling in a desultory way toward your television set in order to tune in, against your better judgment, to what was promising to become the most boring World Series on record. But if you were living in the Bay Area, you were wondering if that shaking was at long last the Big One that would reduce your world to rubble. Both those who looked on and those who lived there were impressed with the dedication and selflessness of the many people who came forward and helped one another during a disaster in which 67 were killed and thousands more were injured. Here is an account, which appeared in an official newsletter, of the care that was provided by one special group of professionals—the San Francisco SPCA.

"After fifteen terrifying seconds the enormous temblor subsides, leaving San Francisco in chaos. In the Marina district...the crumpled wreckage of buildings litters the cracked sidewalks. Water gushes from broken water mains, and...fires blaze like beacons in the pitch black sky...Tales of death and destruction soon pour in. Horrified listeners hear of the collapse of a section of the Cypress freeway, and a gaping hole in the Bay Bridge.

"Hundreds of thousands of animals in the Bay Area were players in this dangerous drama....

"Although no animals [in the SPCA building] were hurt...Society staffers spent individual time soothing each and every frightened pet....

"At 6:00 a.m. the next morning, while most of San Francisco's workforce stayed home from their jobs in the wake of the crisis, [the] SF/SPCA animal attendant[s] were busy cleaning cages and feeding the animals by the light of the generators.

"Other Society staff members were on the front ▶

animal lovers

bondage participants and buffs

celibates

friends of children

henpecked husbands

large men I

large men II

mob-concerned people and things

money-hungry dates

people commonly believed to be dead

random list of well-known names

romantic partners in common

romantic partners of political leaders

romantic partners of Warren Beatty

selfless dates

things in Robert Gottlieb's office

"wives" and convenient escorts



Andrew Lloyd Webber...



and Robert Newton as Long John Silver?



Arnold Schwarzenegger...



and Robbie of My Three Sons?



Jeff Bridges...



and Iran's speaker of the Assembly, Hashemi Ali Akbar Rafsanjani?

SONY



Walter Monheit's  
BLURB-O-MAT

Capsule Movie Reviews by Walter "Dateline: The Copa" Monheit™, the Movie Publicist's Friend—Special Product-Placement Edition

GREEN CARD, starring Andie MacDowell, Gerard Depardieu (Touchstone)pppp

Walter Monheit says, "A Franco-American™ feast fortified with exta ooof! Andie can perform a naturalization act on me any day!"

SCREWFACE, starring Steven Seagal (20th Century Fox)pppp

Walter Monheit says, "For a True Value™ in entertainment hardware, just say-Gall! And hey, what's that in Steve's hand? A Phillips™-head? No—it's Oscar's head!"

TO SLEEP WITH ANGER, starring Danny Glover (Samuel Goldwyn)pppp

Walter Monheit says, "Fluff up the Posturepedic™, Oscar! To sleep with Danny—such is your lot!"

MR. FROST, starring Jeff Goldblum, Alan Bates (SVS)pppp

Walter Monheit says, "Jeff's Big Chill has turned to Frost—and Oscar's warming to him like Thinsulate™!"

What the monocles mean: pppp – excellent; ppppp – indisputably a classic



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LANCÔME  
PARIS





# THE BEST MEALS OF THEIR LIVES

The SPY Intraneighborhood Celebrity-Headshot Census



THE FINE PRINT CONTINUED

lines of the disaster immediately. As they headed [in ambulances] into the heart of the ravaged [Marina] district, passing several police checkpoints, Society staff felt as if they were driving straight into a scene from a disaster film. "The sky was full of fire, and the devastation was incredible!" reported...an SF/SPCA outreach worker...SF/SPCA staff distributed leashes to people struggling to control frightened canines. They helped one couple confine their frantic feline to the safety of [a] complimentary SF/SPCA cat carrier...

"Gwen Bohnenkamp, the Society's Animal Behaviorist, was flooded with earthquake-related calls. In the days following the temblor, the Society's pet psychology expert fielded more than 100 phone calls from anxious pet owners...

"The public responded to the crisis with an outpouring of goodwill. Animal lovers...like 69-year-old Ruby Peterson did whatever they could for the cause. Ruby had been saving her pennies for eight years, and decided she wanted the money to go to pets affected by the earthquake. With her 22-year-old cat Missy looking on, she donated the 34-pound cache of pennies to the Society."

## THE BEAUTIFUL PEOPLE'S COURT

Case No. C730583 in the Superior Court of California *Randall Jackson v. Cher et al.*

Jackson—Michael's 29-year-old brother and a performer himself—contends that on December 7, 1988, he leased to Cher a condominium, unit 1805 at 10560 Wilshire Boulevard in Los Angeles. Jackson says the unit was leased complete with furnishings—including "unique and original paintings and art objects, marble floors, mirrored and glass walls, and exotic flora." Jackson alleges ▶

**O**f all the ways in which thoughts about celebrities come to be lodged in the typical person's brain, perhaps most insidious are the 8x10 glossies affixed to the walls of delicatessens and restaurants. Simply because his image looms over us as we purchase an egg bagel slathered with cream cheese, we are Pavlovianly conditioned to think of Telly Savalas every time we indulge in massive cholesterol ingestion; each time we enter another Italian restaurant decorated with the smiling, autographed visage of Kaye Ballard, we are subliminally reconvinced that Kaye's purpose on the planet is to scour the city in

search of big-time *mangiare*.

With so much being made of this city's gorgeous mosaic, we found ourselves wondering what we could learn about our neighbors by studying their heroes (or, at least, the various famous visitors they were willing to acknowledge indefinitely). Earlier this year—during the same period that U.S. census enumerators were knocking on doors throughout the country—SPY visited five Manhattan neighborhoods in search of significant glyphs. Production stills from movies didn't count; snapshots and informal portraits did—but only if they were autographed.

## TIMES SQUARE

(42nd to 48th Street between Seventh and Tenth Avenues)

**NUMBER OF HEADSHOTS OBSERVED:** 161

**MOST COMMON HEADSHOT:** Seven show-business legends were represented by two pictures apiece—*Kojak*'s Dan Frazer ("Frank McNeil"); Stiller and Meara; Charles Bronson photo double Milan Radunovich; "comedian" Rip Taylor; Lily Tomlin; Ann Wedgeworth (Lana on *Three's Company*); and mimes Shields and Yarnell

**MOST REVEALING INSCRIPTION:** At Rosa's Place (303 West 48th Street)—HI ROSA...THANKS FOR MAKING ME FAT. LOVE, SUE SIMMONS, LIVE AT FIVE

**PROUDEST COLLECTOR:** Marvin Appel, co-owner of the Gaiety Deli, at 224 West 47th Street, pointing to his composite photo of Rip Taylor: "There he is *without* his hair, there he is *with* hair... No one has this picture except us"

## GREENWICH VILLAGE

(Area canvassed: Houston Street to Washington Place between La Guardia Place and Seventh Avenue South)

**NUMBER OF HEADSHOTS OBSERVED:** 167

**MOST COMMON HEADSHOT:** Three pictures each—Syrian oud musician Youssef Kassab, Marilyn Monroe and Frank Sinatra. Two apiece—comic Pat Cooper, Gina Lollobrigida, actor Tony "Toma" Musante, *Married...With Children*'s Ed O'Neill, screenwriter John Patrick Shanley

**EARLY SIGNS OF PROFESSIONAL APTITUDE:** An old, starting-to-fade picture of a young man at the Minetta Tavern on MacDougal Street bears the inscription LOVE 'N KIXXX, JOEY ADAMS

**MOST OBSCURE CELEBRITY:** The owner of the Yatagan Kebab House at 104 MacDougal Street has amid his collection a picture of someone whom he identifies

only as "a famous falafel-maker... famous for 16 years"

**GREATEST CURATORIAL TRAVESTY:** An 8x10 of Adrienne Barbeau at Caffé Dante on MacDougal Street is stained, wrinkled and starting to decompose; its glass frame has shattered

**BEST ASSESSMENT OF THE JOYS OF COLLECTING HEADSHOTS:** The owner of Cafe Capri on Morton Street: "They come in for cappuccino. I ask them to bring in a picture. They're beautiful people"

## UPPER WEST SIDE

(Area canvassed: 66th to 72nd Street between Columbus and Amsterdam Avenues, 73rd to 77th Street between Broadway and Amsterdam)

**NUMBER OF HEADSHOTS OBSERVED:** 93

**MOST COMMON HEADSHOT:** Two pictures each—newscaster Ernie Anastos and "Christina"

**WHO IS CHRISTINA?** A scantily clad woman with life-jacket-size breasts who, according to the bartender of the P&G Bar and Grill on Amsterdam, is "a friend of the owner"

**OTHER SIGNS OF MORAL AND SPIRITUAL DECAY ON THE UPPER WEST SIDE:** Not only does Mama's Famous on Amsterdam have a picture of a Penthouse Pet of the Year bearing the handwritten message I HAVE A SPECIAL ORDER. I HOPE YOU CAN FILL IT, but the manager says of his clientele, "We get some people from soap operas...and a lot of nude models"

## LOWER EAST SIDE

(Allen to Attorney Street between Houston and Delancey Streets)

**NUMBER OF HEADSHOTS OBSERVED:** 1

**MOST COMMON HEADSHOT:** The only headshot found was that of Neil Armstrong, in the window of Katz's Delicatessen on Houston. Although Katz's co-owner Alan Dell says Armstrong is

a hero to the Jewish community ("He went to the moon!"), he feels the picture has not drawn in a lot of customers off the street. "He's not a rabbi—that would *really* bring people in"

## LITTLE ITALY

(Houston to Canal Street between Mulberry Street and the Bowery)

**NUMBER OF HEADSHOTS OBSERVED:** 403

**MOST COMMON HEADSHOT:** Singer Jimmy Roselli (seven), Robert De Niro (four), Pat Cooper (three), Tony Danza (three), Tony Lo Bianco (three)

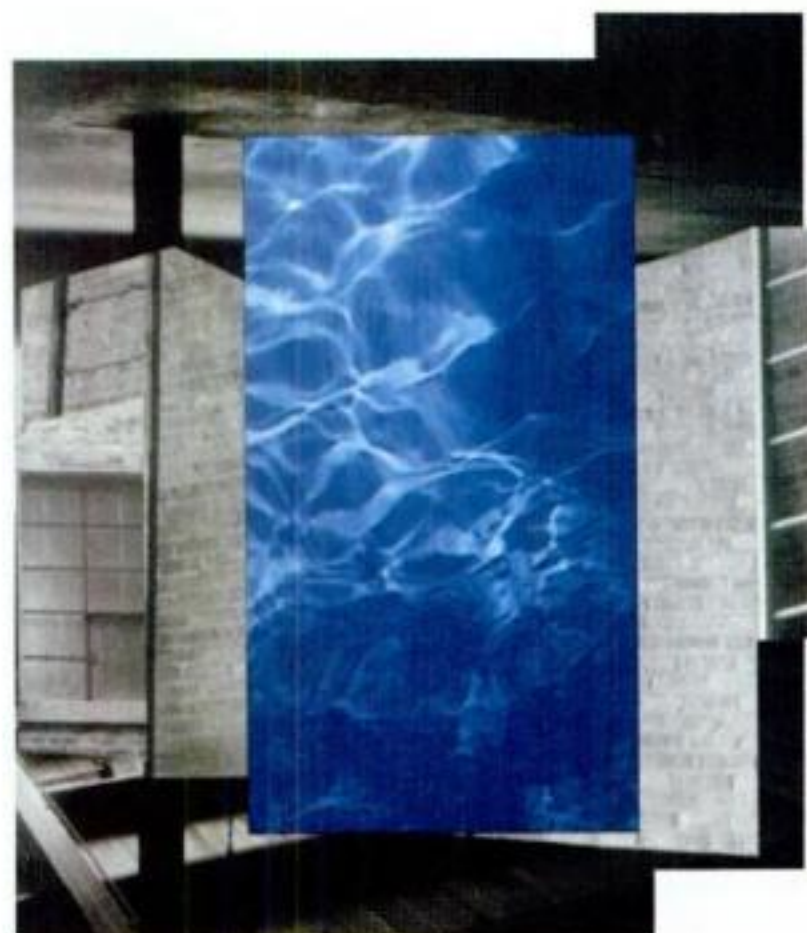
**SADDEST COMMENTARY ON THE LITTLE ITALY HEADSHOT EXPERIENCE:** The hostess of Luna's Restaurant on Mulberry Street: "These are all the pictures we have. Half of these people are dead"

**MOST DEFENSIVE ATTITUDE TOWARD COLLECTION:** Although Marionetta Ristorante on Mulberry Street has only two headshots (of Leslie Uggams and wrestler The Iron Messiah), its manager says, "But these are *real*. Other people buy pictures and put them up. These are the real thing"

**MOST EFFUSIVE HEADSHOT:** The Grotta Azzurra Restaurant on Broome Street has a picture of Kaye Ballard with her three poodles, labeled PUNKY, POCKETS, AND BIG SHIRL BALLARD...WE ALL LOVE YOUR PASTA!! AMORÉ, KATHERINA XXXX + GRR (the first *a* in *Katherina* is rendered with a smiley face)

**SEEMING INCONSISTENCY:** Ann Jillian's picture at Ristorante Taormina on Mulberry Street gushes, TAORMINA RESTAURANT IS MY HOME IN LITTLE ITALY. THERE IS NO FINER FOOD. LOVE AND THANK YOU. GOD BLESS! Yet at Vincent's on Mott Street, just five blocks away, another Jillian headshot announces, SO-OO GOOD EVERY TIME WE COME TO VISIT! AND WE LOVE WHAT YOU DID WITH THE NEW LOOK —Henry Alford





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A SPY Grooming Guide for the Spiritually Ambitious



THE FINE PRINT CONTINUED

that prior to moving in, Cher made a number of "peculiar" demands—for instance, that "the top mattress in the master bedroom be removed, leaving only the box spring, and that a grand piano, the dining room table and chairs, various small plants, all artwork and paintings...except two stone bowls in the kitchen, all bedding material except the comforter in the master bedroom, an ashtray in the den and all kitchen utensils be removed." He says he complied with all of Cher's "whimsical" demands. The lease was for one year, commencing December 1988; rent was to be \$9,500 a month.

Jackson says Cher paid rent through March, then decided she would prefer to live elsewhere and moved out, but not before "unlawfully, wrongfully, intentionally, and maliciously" demanding that some of the previously removed items be returned to the apartment. On April 26 Cher terminated the lease; Jackson says, however, that "Cher insists that she still possesses the luxury condominium and refuses [him] any and all access."

Cher replies that Jackson's failure to restore the furnishings interfered with her ability to sublease the premises. She also says Jackson further interfered with her efforts to sublease by "retaking the premises and conducting a seance." A compelling elaboration on this charge is contained in a letter from Cher's lawyer to Jackson's lawyer concerning Cher's counterclaim: "Mr. Malone [Cher's real estate agent] reported to me that on entering the unit with his prospective tenant, he observed the unit to have been occupied recently and left completely unclean and untidy. There were burnt candles in a circle on the living room floor, as if a seance or some sort of ritual had been performed." The case is still pending. D

**A**lthough the current Dalai Lama is only 55 years old and in good health, he will nevertheless need to be succeeded upon his death. The process by which this happens—Tibetan monks, alerted by portents, traipse off in search of the toddler thought to be the Dalai Lama's reincarnation—naturally has many curious, mystical underpinnings. Especially curious is that the child doesn't have to be born in Tibet, can be male or female and can be of any race or religion. In short, simply by following the five steps outlined below, your little Heather or Brian could actually be the next living Buddha to 14 million people.

To many, such a prospect is a little daunting. You might be thinking, *Why would anyone want to be the parent of the spiritual and temporal head of Tibet?* Because the Dalai Lama is the reincarnation

of the Lord of Compassion, whose every action is inspired by his altruistic motivation to help others. *But how can I be sure that this compassion isn't just a phase he'll grow out of?* Even though he is an individual who has transcended the cycle of birth, death and rebirth, so intense is the Dalai Lama's commitment to his spiritual agenda that he *allows* himself to be reborn just for the sake of helping mankind. *It all sounds so fabulous, you say. But I'm probably going to spend a lot of time and energy on this—can I expect to have any fun?* At one of the induction ceremonies held in 1939 for the current Dalai Lama, many of the 70,000 people who attended sang, danced and literally wept for joy. Others ate yak meat served in troughs.

Interested? Here's how it's done.

**1 Between roughly one month and four years after the previous Dalai Lama's death, go someplace where people are really miserable, and conceive.** Successors to the Dalai Lama tend to be found in places where some kind of tragedy has happened, the notion being that an auspicious occurrence (e.g., the birth of the king of dharma) should be offset by one equally dire (e.g., four years of crop failure).

**2 Give birth to a genetic curiosity.** Some of the physical attributes the search team looks for are especially large ears, especially large eyes, eyebrows that curve at the ends, tiger-like streaks on the legs, a conch-shell-like print on one of the palms of the hands, torso moles, and two vestigial bits of skin on the shoulder blades that suggest that the child formerly had an additional pair of arms (the better to be compassionate with).

**3 Get your child to inspire oracles and portents.** The monks are guided toward the successor by oracles' visions and by natural portents such as unusual cloud formations, images seen in Tibet's visionary lakes and the appearance of crows.

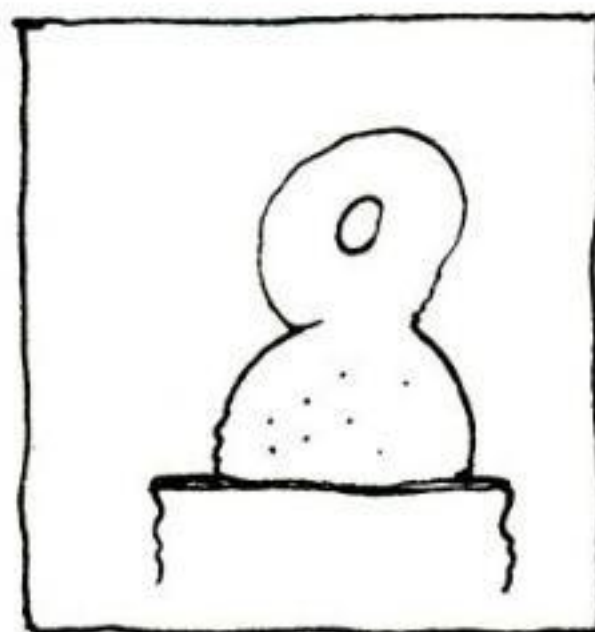
**4 Encourage your child to be anxious, grabby and bossy.** Before Lhamo Dhondrub, the current Dalai Lama, was officially designated, the three-year-old's favorite activity had been to gather household objects and announce, "I'm packing to go to Lhasa [the Holy City]"; then he

would straddle a windowsill in his home—*Whoa, there, windowsill!*—and pretend to be on his way. Great emphasis is placed on the child's ability to recognize his predecessor's possessions; at the first visit from the monks, the two-and-a-half-year-old Lhamo Dhondrub pointed to one of the thirteenth Dalai Lama's rosaries and said, "I want this rosary," and he correctly identified a box in his predecessor's quarters as the hiding place of his dentures. The possibility of being selected makes for high-strung behavior; after the monks left young Lhamo Dhondrub, he obsessed over their eventual return and, in a fashion more reminiscent of an addled caterer than of a young king of

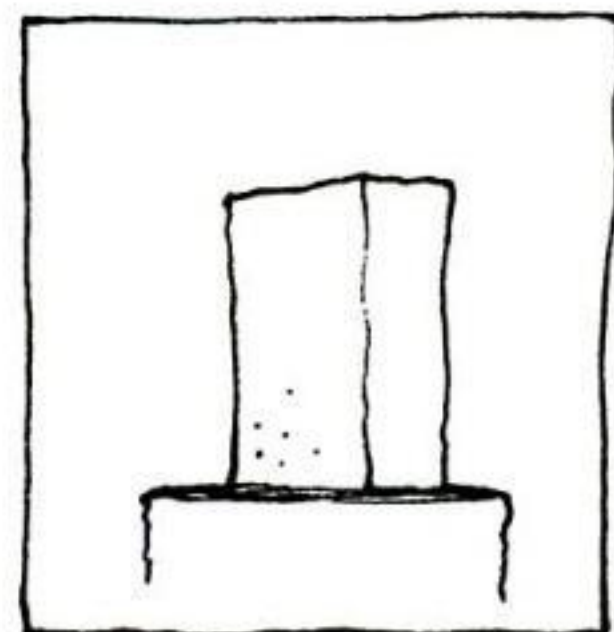
dharma, started badgering his mother with demands: "Please make some special tea; then perhaps they will come" and "When they *do* come, you must give them some good food and a place to rest, for they have traveled from a distant place."

**5 Ready your child for a name change.** The new names bestowed upon Dalai Lamas tend to be both formal and lengthy. It is thus highly possible that the parent of the next Dalai Lama will be forced to admonish someone named "Holy Lord, Gentle Glory, Eloquent, Compassionate, Learned Defender of the Faith, Ocean of Wisdom" to, say, close his mouth while chewing. —Henry Alford

## THE SENATOR HELMS GUIDE TO ACCEPTABLE MODERN ART



OBSCENE



OKAY



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AS POWERFUL AS THIS AUDACIOUS, ELECTRIFYING  
MASTERPIECE FROM THE COEN BROTHERS."**

**—GUY FLATLEY, COSMOPOLITAN**



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THE CREATORS OF "BLOOD SIMPLE" AND "RAISING ARIZONA"**

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MARCIA GAY HARDEN JOHN TURTURRO JON POLITO J.E. FREEMAN AND ALBERT FINNEY IN MILLER'S CROSSING  
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**COMING THIS FALL TO A THEATRE NEAR YOU.**



# MICHAEL LEVINE'S WORLD AND WELCOME TO IT

Fifth in a Series: Actress—Leg Model Joycelyne Lew



It had been quite a while since we'd last heard from our friends at Levine/Schneider, the topflight Hollywood PR agency cofounded by none other than Mr. Michael Levine. He, of course, is the superenthusiastic superagent who handles publicity chores for David Cassidy, Adrienne Barbeau, Lou Ferrigno and many others who have brought joy and light into the world and who need help fielding interview requests from local weeklies, muscle magazines and *Us*.

"Jeff Sullivan—Levine/Schneider," read the note from our receptionist. "Please call back. Re: Christian Brando." That got our attention—a chance to interview Marlon Brando's son, famously awaiting trial in a Los Angeles jail on charges of deliberately and fatally shooting his half-sister's boyfriend in the face!

We called back. We didn't speak to Michael himself, naturally, but we could sense his hand at work. Because what we were really being offered was an interview with one Joycelyne Lew, who, we learned, is an up-and-coming actress-model (brief but surely winning appearances in *Wrong Is Right* and *Border of Tong*, among other films). The hook: she is Christian Brando's girlfriend. Or at least she's dated him. She is also Levine/Schneider's newest client. "An interesting lady," we were told, "who is completely candid about everything...."

And so we now present the belated fifth installment of *The Family of Michael Levine*, our probably decades-long effort to learn everything we can about Michael—the man and the myth—by interviewing every single one of his more than 200 clients as well as his hairdresser.

**SPY:** How long have you been with Michael?  
**Joycelyne Lew:** You mean Christian?

No, Michael. Michael Levine.

Oh. Michael Levine. Just since last month [May—when the Brando shooting occurred]. I was getting all these calls from people [in the media], and I wasn't sure who they were, and when I first started talking to Michael, I said, "Well, it's *Us* magazine calling," and he said, "Well,

how do you know it's not the FBI?" And I said, "That's true. I don't."...I was a nervous wreck. I didn't know if Christian [who was in custody] wanted me to say anything. I didn't know what to do at all. I mean, it's a big responsibility. Here's someone that you, you know, are *dating*, and there's this murder, and their life's at stake and people are asking you questions.

*So Michael suggested you needed Levine/Schneider representation?*

Yeah. I have a friend who works at Paramount—my ex-agent. He's in publicity. He was the one who first suggested I talk to them.

*What's Michael like?*

Well, he doesn't work with me directly, but he seems nice. When I came in [to the Levine/Schneider office], he walked into the room and said, "I just want to meet you." He said, "I'm Michael," and that's how I met him. He didn't really say much. Just that.

*He's kind of a skinny guy, right?*

Uh-huh....I kind of know Michael Viner—he's [TV-movie actress] Deborah Raffin's husband. He's a personal manager, and I knew that he knew Michael. So I said to Michael, "I know someone who knows you." I'd heard of him.



*You'd heard good things?*  
Yeah.

*So you have a lot of connections with Michael.*

Hollywood is such a small town, I'm sure you know. Even yesterday in court [for Christian's bail hearing], this girl turns around and says, "Hi, Joycelyne, remember me?" And it turns out I had done a video with her!

*She's also a client of Michael's?*

No. Just a friend of Christian's.

*Are you and Christian still an item? Or are you just friends?*

Of course, now it's so hard, because he's *there* [jail]. But I was the first one to see

him after they allowed people in besides family. We never broke up or anything. Last time I saw him he said, "Okay, I'll call you later." Then all these different things happened [e.g., a trip to Rome, the shooting]. I never argued with him or anything. But because of the situation in Hollywood, people do go out with more than one person. He's a boyfriend, is how I'd call him.

*It must be very difficult trying to manage a blossoming career and at the same time having a boyfriend accused of murder.*

It's been real stressful. I gave up a job on *Days of Our Lives* because he was having a bail hearing that same day.

*Do Christian and Michael know each other? Are they friendly?*

No. I doubt it.

*Does Marlon know Michael?*

I don't think so. The only person who knows Michael is my friend at Paramount.

*But now you know Michael, too.*

Well, I just met him. I shook his hand.

*Let's talk about you. What's on the horizon, careerwise?*

I have two films I'm doing. One is called *No Tears*. It's a Canadian production. And I've got a leg-modeling job at one o'clock today. I'm doing print for *Leg Videos*.

*What's Leg Videos?*

It's videos....

*Of just legs?*

Yeah. There are people who...like legs.

*This is for men, you mean?*

Well, I suppose. I mean, I don't know if there are lesbian leg fans. [Laughs.] I mean, I don't know anything about this. I got this through my modeling agent. I'm just doing ads for it. We shot some stuff three weeks ago, but the flash didn't work. So the photographer wasted the whole day. He said he had to reshoot.

*Kind of like, "Uh-oh, ran out of gas"?*

What do you mean? —Bruce Handy



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# OCTOBER DATEBOOK

Enchanting and  
Alarming Events  
Upcoming

**2** The Brooklyn Academy of Music's Next Wave Festival opens with Martha Clarke's *Endangered Species*, a dance-theater piece featuring a young elephant named Flora, among other four-legged performers. "The animals will be integrated into the work not as beasts of burden or as circus animals or embarrassed icons," promises the press release, "but as sentient creatures." As if elephants feel perfectly comfortable stomping around onstage while Anna Kisselgoff appraises their work.

**4** First day of the New York Botanical Garden's "Bonsai Weekend," a celebration of the dwarf trees with stunted roots; the Bronx. Alas, these folks make no pretense of treating *their* little friends as sentient creatures, opting instead to cruelly deform the defenseless flora for purely cosmetic reasons. Picketers, meet at Southern Boulevard entrance, 9:00 a.m., with STOP THE PRUNING signs.

**8** Columbus Day Parade. Newspaper pundits publish would-be-elegiac essays involving Bensonhurst and the phrase *time for the healing to begin*.

**10** "Descent of the Cows." The heifers of Schwarzenburg, Switzerland, conclude their summer idyll in the high Alpine meadows and descend for the winter; the locals become giddy and celebratory. At last, a tangible consequence of a warless history!

**13** Nipsey Russell turns 66.

**22** "International Packaging Showtime," a trade show, begins its three-day run at the New York Penta Hotel. Citizens of far-flung nations are peacefully united by the international language of shrink wrap.



**27** American Society of Journalists and Authors/New York University Writers Symposium for Physicians; NYU Medical Center. Dreary workshops on medical publishing are transformed into informal fiction readings: "The cardiac monitor beeped faster and faster. On the table, the attending physician found himself the meat in a blond-O.R.-nurse sandwich. 'Time for your surgical scrub,' cooed one of them...."

**31** Halloween. Pick hit: Reese's Peanut Butter Cups. Must-avoid: Zagnuts. ☹



## THE LIZ SMITH TOTE BOARD

A Monthly Tally

mentioned once every...

<b>Liz herself</b> (described once as a "size 14").....	2
<b>Donald Trump</b> .....	3.4
<b>Ivana Trump</b> .....	4
<b>Madonna</b> .....	4.8
<b>Frank Sinatra</b> .....	4.8
<b>Elizabeth Taylor</b> .....	4.8
<b>Helen Gurley Brown</b> .....	6
<b>David Dinkins</b> .....	6
<b>Warren Beatty</b> .....	8
<b>Marla Maples</b> .....	8
<b>Bette Midler</b> .....	8
<b>Peter Allen</b> .....	12
<b>Tony Bennett</b> .....	12
<b>John Lindsay</b> .....	12
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<b>John Chancellor's open-heart surgery</b> .....	24
<b>The Polish Education Ministry</b> .....	24

...days



WHEN TELECONFERENCES GO WRONG

## SPY SALUTES THE STARS OF TOMORROW TODAY



**SPY:** Have people responded well to this headshot?

**Erville Light, Star of Tomorrow:** Some of my best work has come from that picture.

**SPY:** Your résumé says you have beautiful nails. What's that all about?

**Light:** They *are* beautiful. I do them because it gets people's attention. This week I have tie-dye....I went to an open call for the new Paul Mazursky film, and I had my nails airbrushed to look like...denim with black stripes on them—sort of animalistic. ☹



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Steven



Jack

## THE MOUTH THAT BORED: THE LAST DAYS OF THE JACK VALENTI FLACKATHON?

*Hit the Road, Jack:* The flurry of late-summer telephone calls between Lew Wasserman (the ancient overlord of MCA/Univer-

sal), Barry Diller (the overlord of Fox), Michael Eisner (the overlord of Disney) and Mike Ovitz (the overlord) concerned a potential problem that lay just over the horizon. It had to do with movies and their putative effects on real life. This worried them: the big-budget movies of the summer (*Total Recall*, *Robocop 2*, *Die Harder*, *Another 48 Hrs.*) and the most celebrated of the \$1-million-plus scripts sold recently (*The Last Boy Scout*, *The Ticking Man*, *Basic Instinct*) were all of the hyperviolent action-fantasy variety. This worried them, too: Detroit is a postapocalyptic armed camp, novelty murderers terrorize New York, teenagers in the Midwest kill friends for fun. In the movies, more and more, people are using sexy automatic weapons against one another with horrifying nonchalance. In real life, more and more, people are using sexy automatic weapons against one another with horrifying nonchalance. "Our message," one studio executive fretted out loud, "is that life is cheap." Whether or not there is a connection between special-effects homicide and the real thing, the current worry in Hollywood is that someone like Jesse Helms will start believing there is one, which might lead to some really senseless, really tragic violence—terminated projects and fired executives.

Sitting in the middle of all this is the waxen, banty figure of Jack Valenti, who as head of the Motion Picture Association of America is Hollywood's chief lobbyist-flack in Washington and the prime

defender of the studios' beleaguered rating system, which is supposed to protect certain members of the public (children) from certain films (obscene ones). The consensus among studio executives is that Valenti may have to go. As a highly paid lobbyist for the movie industry for the last 24 years, he has parroted the party line faithfully, perhaps a little too faithfully. Valenti's smarmy, by-the-numbers brand of spin control may be doing more harm than good.

And this year, once again, the debate over the capricious rating system has pointed to the same inconsistencies: Gratuitous violence is acceptable under all conditions. Sex is more complex: Richard Gere can needle Andy Garcia about fucking his wife "up the ass" in *Internal Affairs* and the film receives an R, but a benign sexually explicit movie like *Tie Me Up! Tie Me Down!* gets an X.

Poor Jack's robotic, glassy-eyed responses to criticisms of this system seem pathetically dated, and the more he tries to explain the ratings' rationale, the less sense it makes. Really, he's sounding increasingly like a National Rifle Association mouthpiece. Particularly upsetting to the studios was Valenti's article in *The New York Times's* Arts and Leisure section, in which he used his trademark tortured logic to say that the rating system isn't really censorship despite the fact that it forces people to change their films in order to have a chance at being profitable. This sort of addled presentation by a flack doesn't inspire confidence in the people who employ him. No one wants to alter the message—mayhem obviously sells—so the thinking goes, *Why not just change the messenger?*

*Amblin' to CAA:* Since Steven Spielberg

has been represented for years in deal negotiations by his lawyer Barry Hirsch, why did he finally break down and get himself an agent? Because the boy genius is no longer getting "A" material. It was almost a decade ago that he bought the film rights to Thomas Keneally's superb World War II novel *Schindler's List*, with the attendant announcement that he was going to start making grown-up films. That script sat on the shelf for years while Spielberg did projects like *The Color Purple* and *Always*. There is also the perception that for all his vast moviemaking talent, Spielberg is, for the moment, out of sync with the times; that he has lost touch with the audience; that his core following of children and teenagers have a funkier, sexier worldview than he does; that dark (*Batman*, *Total Recall*) sells better than lite (*Always*, *Arachnophobia*). When you get into trouble like that and need to rejigger a prolific and lustrous career, whom do you turn to but the most powerful agent in Hollywood, Mike "the Manipulator" Ovitz?

No one wants  
to change the  
message....  
Why not just  
change the  
messenger?

*Trims and Ends:* Our condolences to Paramount's head of production, Gary Lucchesi. He was blamed for the disappointing returns on films over which he had practically no control—*Days of Thunder*, the Simpson-Bruckheimer remake of *Top Gun*; and *Another 48 Hrs.*, the Eddie Murphy remake of *48 Hrs.* The irony, of course, is that David Kirkpatrick, Lucchesi's corporate rival hired from Disney and the executive now in charge of Eddie Murphy, came in the same week that *Ghost*—which Lucchesi was responsible for—became the first (and only) bona fide surprise hit of the summer.

See you Monday night at Mortons.

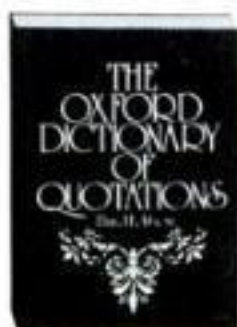
—Celia Brady



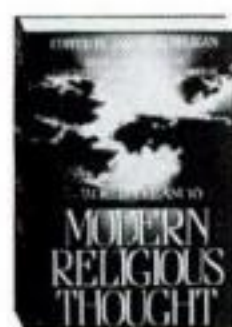
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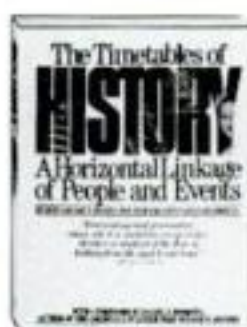
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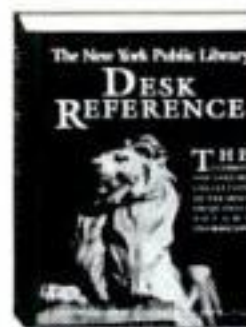
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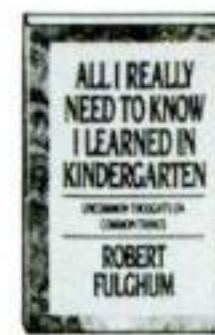
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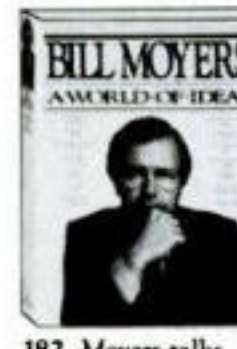
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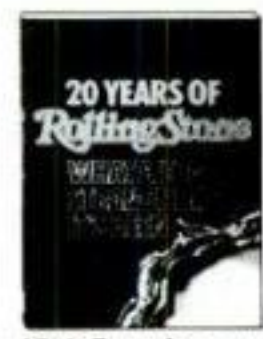
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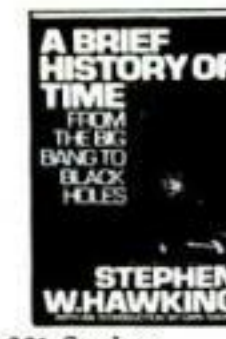
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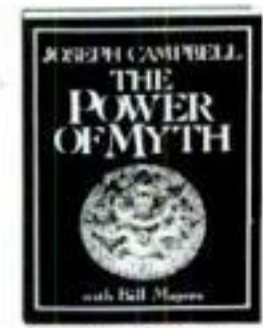
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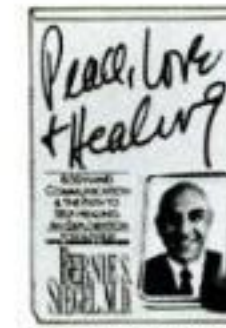
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Eisenhower...Nixon...Carter...Reagan.  
*Rabbit, Run...Rabbit Redux...Rabbit Is Rich...Rabbit at Rest.*

Acclaimed second novel...Embarrassment...Pulitzer winner...Nobel clincher?

The world waits as this month Knopf publishes the fourth installment in the life of Harry "Rabbit" Angstrom, John Updike's Everyman and a literary descendant of Leopold "Chicken" Bloom and Ralph "Yak" Kramden. Neither James Joyce nor Jackie Gleason ever won the Nobel Prize, but this has not deterred Updike. At the end of each decade since his graduation from Harvard, he has written a Rabbit novel, setting it in the decade's final year and illuminating by his

art the political and social concerns of the period. With *Rabbit at Rest*, set in 1989, Updike once more sends us a dispatch from the Brewer/Mt. Judge/Penn Park standard metropolitan statistical area.

Updike insists that his latest book will complete the series, and the title would imply a certain finality. Still, the author leaves an opening. Remember Darth Vader hurtling into space at the end of *Star Wars*? Remember Spock lying motionless at the end of *Star Trek II*? Updike uses a similar plot device just in case 1999 is irresistible (Quayle...*Rabbit, Really!*... Nobel clincher this time for sure). We may, however, have to take the author at his word. We must face the prospect that Updike will never again transcribe for us

the interior monologues of his modestly intelligent car salesman, that we will never again read of Rabbit's oral-sex technique, his golf swing, his upper-lower-middlebrow pleasures, his awed, surprisingly subtle view of God (a view possibly more likely to be held by a potential Nobel Prize-winning novelist who has a penchant for Karl Barth than by a car salesman and former linotyper).

But do not despair. The fact is, we no longer even need Updike to write new Rabbit books. We can do it ourselves, as can the generations that follow us. SPY's Rabbit by the Numbers provides a simple, step-by-step procedure that permits anyone to continue the story of Harry Angstrom. All you need to do is wait ten years.

### RABBIT BY THE NUMBERS

**HOW IT WORKS:** Ten years have passed; it is 2000, or 2010. The lack of a new Rabbit book leaves you with a feeling of emptiness and confusion. How to replace a fallen lodestar? Easy: just follow the steps below and plug in the appropriate new TV shows, sex acts and prices. Voilà! The book you have created — *Rabbit, Restaurateur*, say, or *Rabbit in Rome* — will define an era.

#### 1 HAVE THE STORY BEGIN ON A SIGNIFICANT DAY — OR NOT.

**RUN:** the eve of the vernal equinox, Friday, March 20, 1959

**REDUX:** the day Apollo XI was launched — Wednesday, July 16, 1969

**RICH:** Saturday, June 30, 1979 ("this long last Saturday in June")

**REST:** December 27, 1988 ("the Tuesday after Christmas in the last year of Reagan's reign")

#### 2 THEN GIVE RABBIT A (NEW) OCCUPATION...

**RUN:** MagiPeel Peeler demonstrator at dime stores briefly for a concern called the MagiPeel Peeler Company, then gardener briefly, then car salesman briefly

**REDUX:** linotyper at

Verity Press, then unemployed

**RICH:** chief sales representative at Springer Motors, which holds the local Toyota franchise

**REST:** retired



#### 3 AND (MORE) MONEY.

**RUN:** take-home pay of \$77 a week for peeler demonstrating, then \$40 a week as a part-time gardener

**REDUX:** according to Rabbit's wife, Janice, "seven or whatever dollars



an hour" as a linotyper

**RICH:** nearly \$50,000 a year

**REST:** doesn't work because "Janice is rich"

#### 4 DESCRIBE HIS WIFE JANICE'S FOREHEAD OR CRANIUM.

**RUN:** 4 references. For example, "She is a small woman whose skin tends toward olive and looks tight, as if something swelling inside is straining against her littleness. Just yesterday, it seems to him, she stopped being pretty. With the addition of two short wrinkles at the corners, her mouth has become greedy; and her hair has

thinned, so he keeps thinking of her skull underneath"

**REDUX:** 2 references. For example, "He had forgotten how short she is, how the dark hair has thinned back from the tight forehead, with the oily shine that put little bumps along the hairline"



**RICH:** 9 references. For example, "Sweat of exertion has made her hair springier; her bangs have curled back to reveal that high glossy forehead that is so much her, now and twenty years ago, that he kisses it, tasting salt"

**REST:** 9 references. For example, "A look of pain crosses Janice's face, rippling her exposed forehead; for once, he realizes, he is thinking slower than she is"

#### 5 HAVE JANICE POUR HERSELF A SWEETISH DRINK.

**RUN:** an old-fashioned

**REDUX:** vermouth

**RICH:** Campari

**REST:** Campari





## 6 DESCRIBE THE TIMES BY TOSSING IN CURRENT EVENTS...

**RUN:** 47 references, including:  
Eisenhower's meeting with Macmillan  
Tibetans' fighting Chinese

**REDUX:** 112 references. **THE BIG SIX:**



Vietnam  
Vietnam  
Vietnam  
Chappaquiddick  
urban race riots  
the moon walk

**RICH:** 123 references. **THE BIG SIX:**

gas shortages  
Embassy hostages in Iran  
Three Mile Island  
Carter and the killer rabbit  
Pope John Paul II's first U.S. visit  
Donna Summer and disco

**REST:** 217 references. **THE BIG SIX:**  
bombing of Pan Am flight 103  
Bush, the "do-nothing" president  
Hurricane Hugo  
AIDS  
Japanese trade policy  
Pete Rose's banishment from baseball

## 7 TV SERIES...

**RUN:** 3 references —  
*The Mickey Mouse Club*  
*The Mighty Mouse Playhouse*  
*Queen for a Day*

**REDUX:** 19 references —  
*Bewitched*  
*The Carol Burnett Show*  
*The Dating Game*  
*The David Frost Show*  
*Gilligan's Island*  
*Gomer Pyle, U.S.M.C.*  
*Hogan's Heroes*  
*The Jackie Gleason Show*  
*Let's Make a Deal*  
*Mannix*  
*Match Game*  
*The Merv Griffin Show*  
*The Mod Squad*  
*My Three Sons*  
*Petticoat Junction*



*Rouan and Martin's Laugh-In*  
*Sesame Street*<sup>1</sup>  
*The Six O'Clock News*  
*The Tonight Show*

**RICH:** 26 references —  
*All in the Family*  
*As the World Turns*  
*Battlestar Galactica*  
*Beat the Clock*  
*The Carol Burnett Show*  
*Charlie's Angels*  
*Days of Our Lives*  
*The Edge of Night*  
*Fantasy Island*  
*The Guiding Light*  
*Hollywood Squares*  
*I Love Lucy*  
*The Iran Crisis: America Held Hostage*  
*The Jeffersons*  
*Lost in Space*  
*The Love Boat*  
*M\*A\*S\*H*  
*The Merv Griffin Show*

*The Mike Douglas Show*  
*One Life to Live*  
*The Phil Donahue Show*  
*Saturday Night Live*  
*Search for Tomorrow*  
*The Tonight Show*  
*The Waltons*  
*Welcome Back, Kotter*

**REST:** 38 references —  
*Cheers*  
*The Cosby Show*  
*Family Ties*  
*The Golden Girls*  
*Growing Pains*  
*Jacques Cousteau*  
*The Jeffersons*  
*Jeopardy!*  
*L.A. Law*  
*Leave It to Beaver*  
*Living Body*  
*MacNeil/Lehrer Newshour*  
*Matlock*  
*Murder, She Wrote*  
*National Geographic*  
*Nature's Way*

*NBC News With Tom Brokaw*  
*Night Court*  
*The Oprah Winfrey Show*  
*Perfect Strangers*  
*Planet Earth*  
*Portraits of Power*  
*Roseanne*  
*Saturday Night Live*  
*Smithsonian World*  
*Simon & Simon*  
*60 Minutes*  
*thirtysomething*  
*Today*  
*The Tonight Show*  
*Unsolved Mysteries*  
*War and Peace in the Nuclear Age*  
*Wheel of Fortune*  
*Wildlife Chronicles*  
*The Wonder Years*  
*Wonders of the World*  
*World News Tonight With Peter Jennings*  
*The World of Survival*



## 8 A JOKE OR RIDDLE THAT'S GOING AROUND, TO HELP REINFORCE THE THEME...

**RUN:** "But man, mine was *belium*"  
"Stripper, hell. I've been in here three weeks looking for my *motorcycle*!"

**REDUX:** "You know what a rape is? It's a woman who changed her mind afterward"  
"I've always been interested in Indian affairs"

**RICH:** "You can't beat Christopher Columbus for mileage. Look

how far he got on three galleons"  
"I liked what Earl Butz said some years ago. He no play-a the game, he no make-a the rules"

**REST:** "Here's a Jewish joke for you. Abe meets Izzy after a long time no see. He asks, 'How many children do you have?' Izzy says, 'None.' Abe says, 'None! So what do you do for aggravation?'"

## 9 AND SOME EMBARRASSING SEX.

**RUN:** fellatio (once)  
intercourse (twice)  
masturbation (once)



**REDUX:** cunnilingus (three times)  
fellatio (three times)  
intercourse (six times)  
masturbation (five times)

**RICH:** anal intercourse (once)  
cunnilingus (twice)  
fellatio (twice)  
intercourse (six times; three doggie-style)  
masturbation (five times)  
sitting on woman's face (once)

**REST:** cunnilingus (once)  
fellatio (once)  
intercourse (three times)  
masturbation (once)

## 10 CONDUCT AN INFLATION WATCH.

**RUN:** 1959 market basket —  
1 package of eight hot dogs  
1 package frozen lima beans  
1 package frozen french fries  
1 quart milk  
1 jar relish  
1 loaf raisin bread  
1 ball of cheese  
1 Ma Sweitzer's shoo-fly pie  
\$2.43 total

**REDUX:** carpet, \$11 a yard  
Schlitz, \$0.40  
humidifier, \$12.95  
minibike, \$180  
nursing home, \$50 a day  
preteen allowance, \$1.50 a week  
Quikease Electric Massager with Scalp Comb, \$11.95

burned shell of a tract house, \$19,500

**RICH:** 1979 evening at home —  
3 pizzas  
2 six-packs of beer  
\$13

gasoline, \$0.999 a gallon  
1970 dollars, \$2  
Planter's cashews, \$2.89 a jar  
Toyota Corolla (basic model), \$3,900  
30 Krugerands, plus tax and commission, \$11,314.20  
little stone house with sunken den, \$78,000

**REST:** the house on Joseph Street, \$300,000  
computer repairman, \$120 an hour  
gram of cocaine, \$75  
rock of crack, \$10

## 11 MENTION RUNNING...

**RUN:** 35 times  
**REDUX:** 46 times  
**RICH:** 51 times  
**REST:** 10 times<sup>2</sup>



## 12 AND DEATH AND MORTALITY...

**RUN:** 173 times (every 1.58 pages)  
**REDUX:** 275 times (every 1.23 pages)  
**RICH:** 326 times (every 1.34 pages)  
**REST:** 292 times (every 1.75 pages)



## 13 AND RABBIT'S SISTER, MIM, WHO STANDS FOR ALL WOMEN.

**RUN:** 14 references  
**REDUX:** 49 references  
**RICH:** 34 references  
**REST:** 21 references

## 14 DEVISE A PLOT, BUT DON'T LOSE ANY SLEEP OVER IT.

**RUN:** Rabbit plays basketball. Leaves Janice. Returns. Their newborn baby drowns in the tub. Rabbit runs away again.  
**REDUX:** Rabbit and Janice are back together. Janice leaves him. Rabbit plays host to a wan hippie girl and a black revolutionary. Rabbit's house burns down. Janice returns.  
**RICH:** Nelson, Rabbit's son, marries his pregnant girlfriend

and flees. On a trip to the Caribbean with friends, Rabbit sleeps with his second choice among the other men's wives. He watches the Super Bowl.

**REST:** Rabbit retires to Florida. Nelson's on coke. Rabbit has some heart attacks. He almost dies playing basketball.



## 15 APPEND LAST WORDS.

**RUN:** "Ah; runs. Runs."  
**REDUX:** "He. She. Sleeps. O.K.?"  
**RICH:** "His. Another nail in his coffin. His."  
**REST:** "Maybe. Enough."

<sup>1</sup>Sesame Street premiered November 10, 1969, after the close of this book.

<sup>2</sup>After heart surgery, Rabbit takes up walking, which is thereafter mentioned 9 times.

—Regina White, Daniel Hurewitz and Wendi Williams



THE TIMES



Max



Punch



Abe

**T**here comes to me news that my old friend Abe "I'm Writing as Bad as I Can" Rosenthal—the columnist Abe Rosenthal—paid a surprise visit to the third-floor newsroom, the kingdom where for years he ruled as a respected if erratic martinet. Since he rarely ventures away from his shoji-screened tenth-floor lair these days, his appearance elicited shocked (but polite) hellos from his former charges. Everyone kept a guarded distance—everyone, that is, except managing editor Joseph Lelyveld and assistant managing editor Warren "No" Hoge, who scampered over and greeted their old *Überführer* with apparent warmth.

Abe's visit would have been unthinkable had executive editor Max Frankel not been out of town. Either because of festering animosity or out of sheer fear of being fired, Abe generally avoids his successor. When Max is away from the office, it suits Lelyveld just fine as well. Indeed, the cold, humorless little man, nicknamed Smiley by the foreign desk, has practically taken over the paper long before he is expected to do so officially. (Max isn't due to retire until 1995.) So while Max plays the big-picture chairman, spending his time in his office dictating memos, reading the newspaper and watching TV news, Lelyveld is pretty much running things. He was especially pleased about his boss's lengthy absence during the early days of the Middle East crisis, which caught the paper somewhat off guard. Although *The Washington Post* had a correspondent in Kuwait at the time of the Iraqi invasion, the *Times* did not, and had to dispatch John Kifner from New York to Cairo to help out with the Middle East coverage.

Lelyveld actually declared to intimates that his objective during the summer was to *keep Max on the beach* (a reference to Frankel's summer cottage on Fire Island). The statement could be interpreted as well-intentioned, coming from an underling just trying to make things easier for his boss—or as pernicious, coming from one who would prefer to operate without him. The evidence suggests the latter: Lelyveld, a man of vast intellect and writing talent, appears merely to tolerate his superior and grows visibly impatient when Max is around. At one of the conferences Max convenes in which reporters talk to one another about their jobs—dubbed Borathons by those who have attended them—the boss was talking on and on when Lelyveld began rolling his eyes.

Max recently pulled together a group of senior reporters and editors to form what he calls a Futures Panel, headed by Claudia Payne, chief of the Style section. The panel is charged with discussing weighty matters such as the evolution of the *Times* into a full-color paper and whether it should eventually have five, six or seven sections. Max then drafted a list of other reporters and editors from whom he wanted suggestions. When Lelyveld was handed the list, he sat down and began furiously scratching names off it.

During Nelson Mandela's visit to the U.S. this past summer, the South African hero was to have stopped by the *Times*, but the appointment was scrapped at the last minute, and a dozen of the paper's senior editors and reporters were instead invited to meet him at Gracie Mansion. Max (who snubbed Mikhail Gorbachev after the Soviet president declined to drop

by the *Times*'s offices during his last visit) refused to go uptown to meet Mandela. However, Lelyveld, who was Johannesburg bureau chief before becoming managing editor, did go, and became so emotional over the encounter that he grew flustered and introduced himself to Mandela as managing *director* of the *Times*.

Abe (who has taken to complaining about a certain magazine's description of his wife, Shirley Lord, as "a large-breasted author," which is one clumsy way to label a bosomy dirty-book writer) didn't make the journey up to the Mandela reception, either. He hadn't been invited. Besides, in his primary role as a society juju, he spends most of his time groveling around his swell new "friends." There was a time when Abe was afraid to go to Elaine's for fear of not being recognized and of being seated at an inferior table. That sort of charming reluctance has, under the social-climbing tutelage of the old trouble-and-strife, given way to social scrambling of an advanced sort. A few weeks ago Rosenthal actually hosted a birthday bash, not for a colleague or fellow retired editor or some geopolitical worthy but for the socialite conglomerateur Saul Steinberg.

And finally, here, in its entirety, is a correction that ran in the *Times* and is unrivaled for its understated wit: "Because of a computer error, a line was deleted from Flora Lewis's column in some copies on Saturday. Readers wishing copies of the correct page may write to Production Quality Control, The New York Times, 229 West 43rd Street, New York, N.Y., 10036." Who says the paper doesn't have a sense of humor?

—J. J. Hunsecker

Lelyveld's

objective

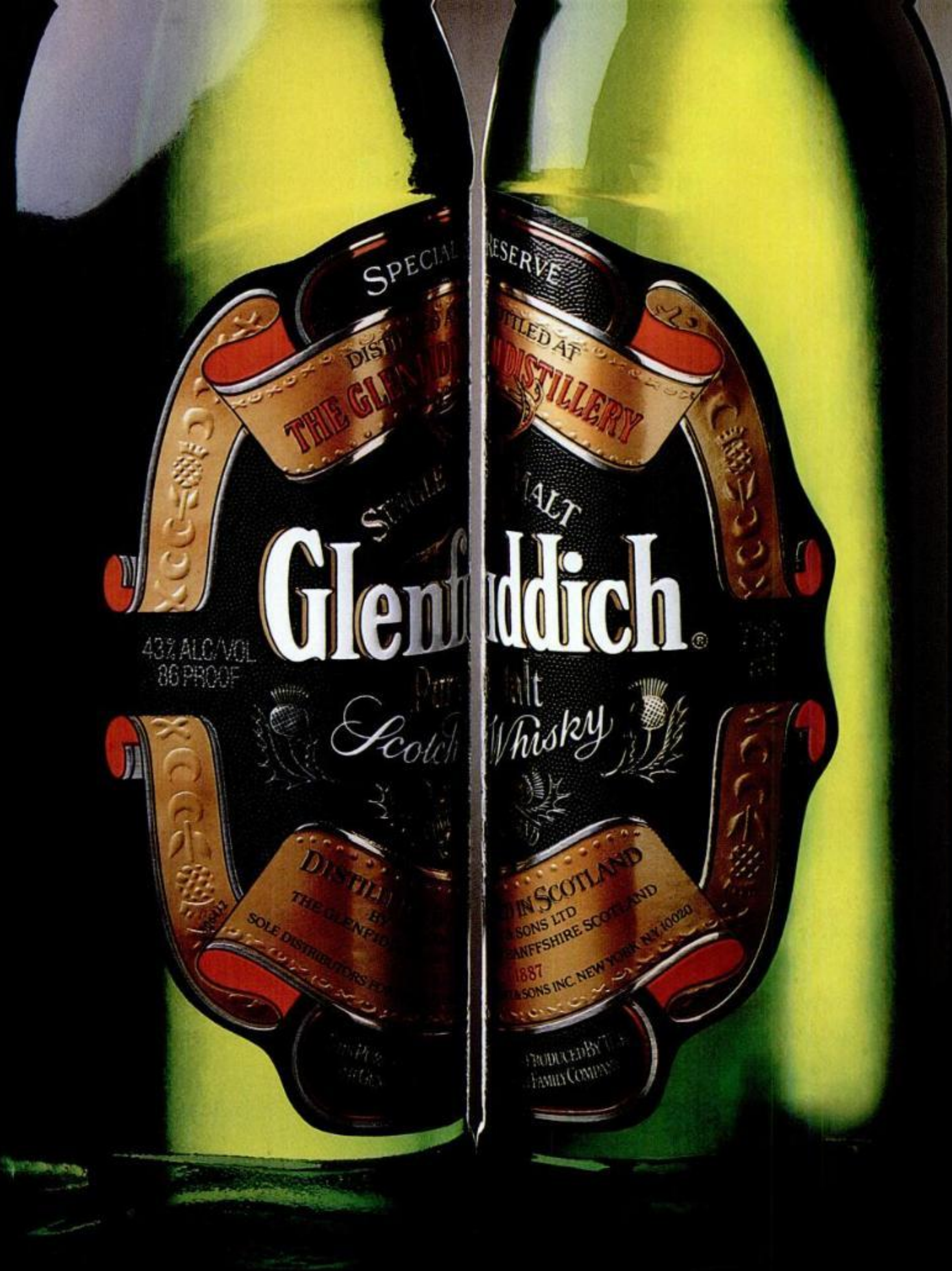
during the

summer was to

keep Max on

the beach





## ENIGMA

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URING 1990, AS IN MANY PREVIOUS YEARS, TIMES CHANGED, AND AS A RESULT OF OUR conscientious effort to stay abreast of developments in every realm of existence, The SPY 100 has changed as well. Back in 1987, fully 55 percent of our list consisted of people—dark, news-making people such as Ivan Boesky and Ed Meese, whom you could pass in the street and say, “There, as I live and breathe, goes 1987 in unfortunate microcosm.” Now, three years later, mass movements and collective actions have superseded personal indiscretions in the news to the point that only 20 of our 100 entries are individual human beings, and an admittedly vague concept like The Declining Standards of Classiness (No. 20) can outrank, oh, Marion Barry (No. 28). More significant, this is the first year in which our No. 1 is not a person but a thing—the savings-and-loan fiasco, which we call S&L Hell. We figured that if *Time* can make an inanimate object its Man of the Year, then we too could break with precedent and still avoid gimmickry. 📦 Of course, we didn’t really have a choice about what was No. 1, since, as always, our SPY 100 mathematical formula (see below) determined the ranking of each entry. Unlike past editions, this year’s SPY 100 does not include a statistical

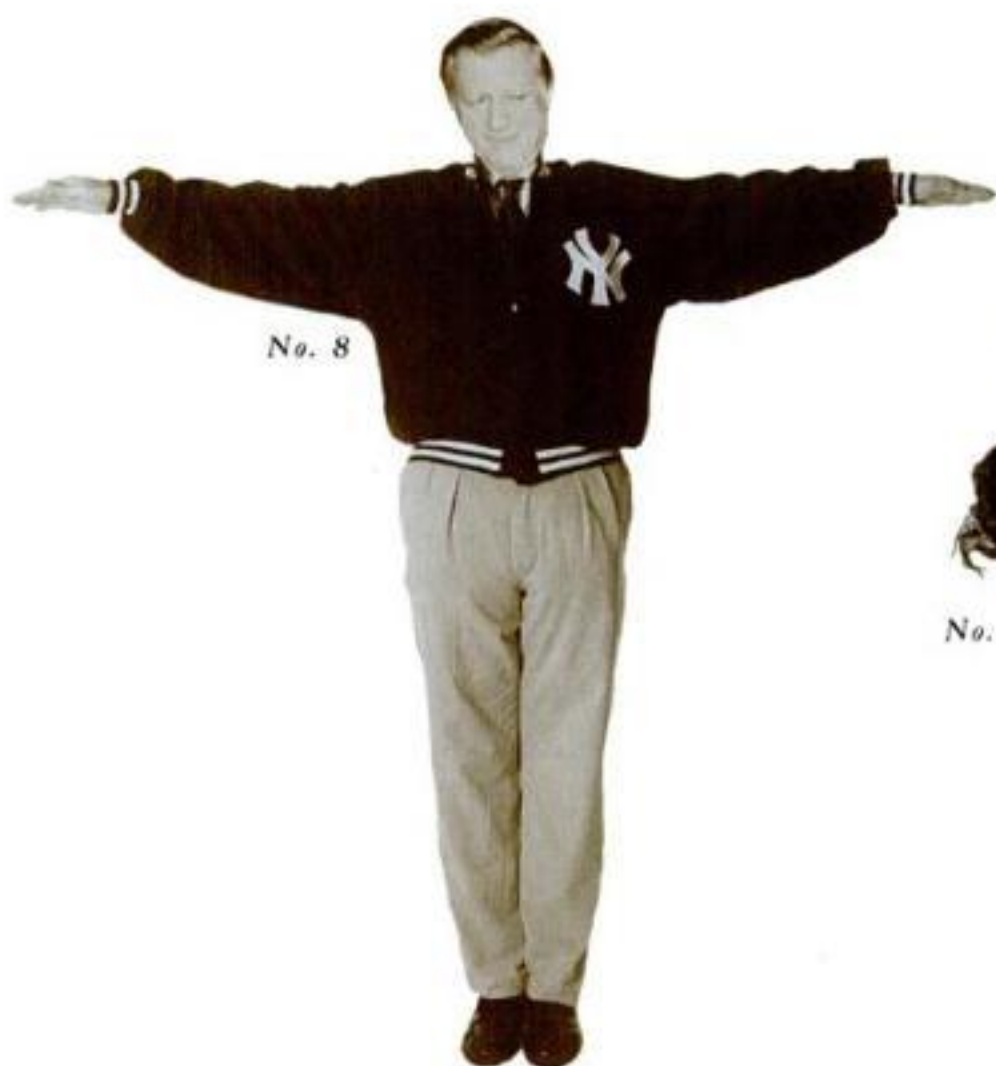
# Our Annual Census of the Most Annoying, Alarming and Appalling People, Places and Things

breakdown of each entry’s Inherent Loathsomeness, Misdeeds, Mitigating Factors and Bonus Points. The numbers are still there, factored out on spreadsheets at the SPY Applied Mathematics Annex in Holmdel, New Jersey; but we’ve spared you the guts and wiring behind the polished final product—the number-crunching was left to our summer interns. Besides, not publishing all the numbers saves space, and those savings are passed on to you—in other words, *full paragraphs* on Coke’s MagiCans (No. 52) and The *Twin Peaks* Life-style (No. 75): 📦 One note about the formula itself: gone is last year’s TrumpScore™, our barometer of Donald Trump’s inevitable connection to everything annoying, alarming and appalling. It’s a sign of the times: Last year Trump attached himself, chiggerlike, to every major news story. This year Trump *is* a major news story, and in tribute to his fiscal, marital and spiritual mismanagement we return him to the list, a strong No. 3. Taking the TrumpScore™’s place is the New World Order Quotient (*Q* in the equation), our estimate of a SPY 100 honoree’s viability in the post–Cold War era. German reunification—*Ein Reich* (No. 71)—naturally receives the maximum 10 points in this category, but The Warren (Beatty) Glut (No. 37) scores just 1. 📦 If only the New World Order Quotient counted for more in the SPY 100 equation, The Flowering of Garage Rock in Ulan Bator (No. 273 on the long list) might have muscled its way onto the abridged list you now hold in your hands. Sadly, the same cannot be said for Milli Vanilli (No. 101), Those Nylon Money Pouches That People Wear Around Their Waists (No. 249), Secretary of the Interior Manuel Lujan (No. 312), ABC-TV’s *Chicken Soup* (No. 884) or The Hot Day the Dog Got Out and Ran Up and Down the Street and Frightened the Neighbors’ Children (No. 957, right after Mayor Dinkins), whose transience practically guarantees their imminent disappearance from even The SPY 1,000.

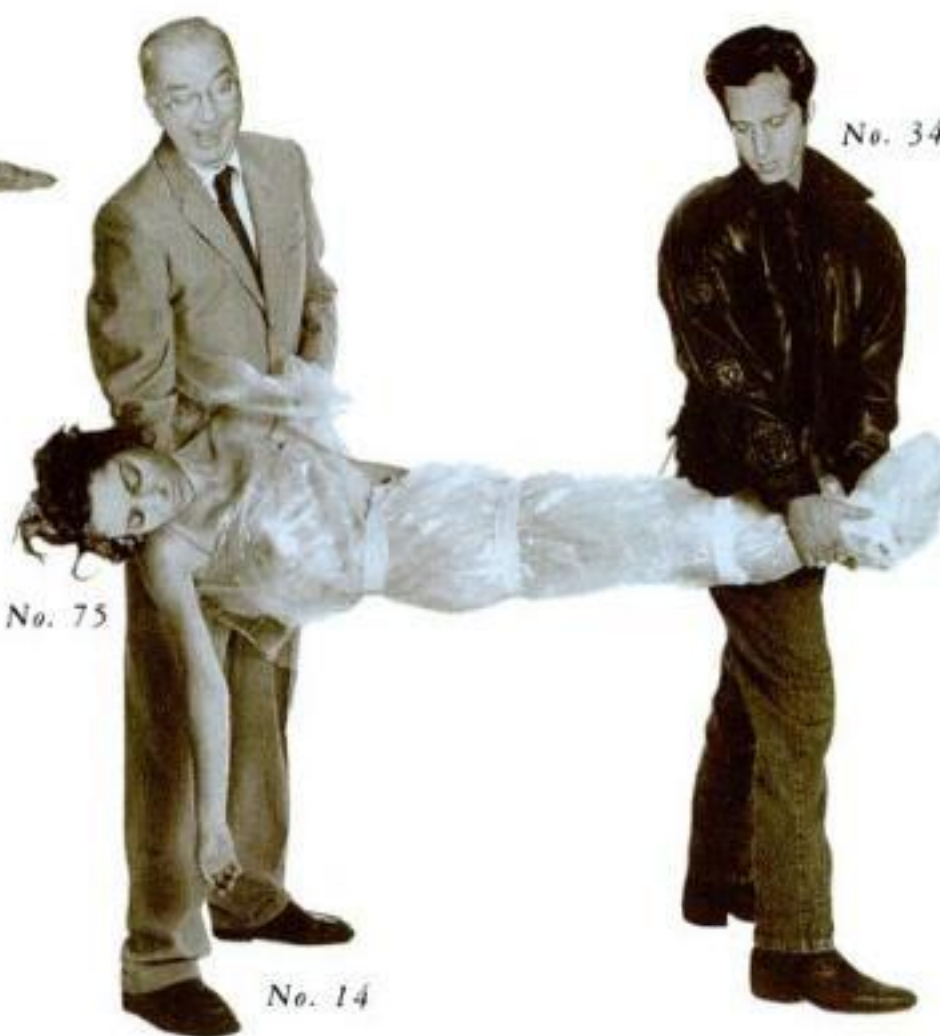
$$\text{SCORE} = \frac{L^2}{2} + \frac{\text{MAX}[(2 \times Q), M] \times M}{\sqrt{F}} + 1 + B^*$$

\* L = Inherent Loathsomeness, Q = New World Order Quotient, M = Misdeeds, F = Mitigating Factors, B = Bonus Points





No. 8



No. 75

No. 14



No. 34



No. 20

No. 92



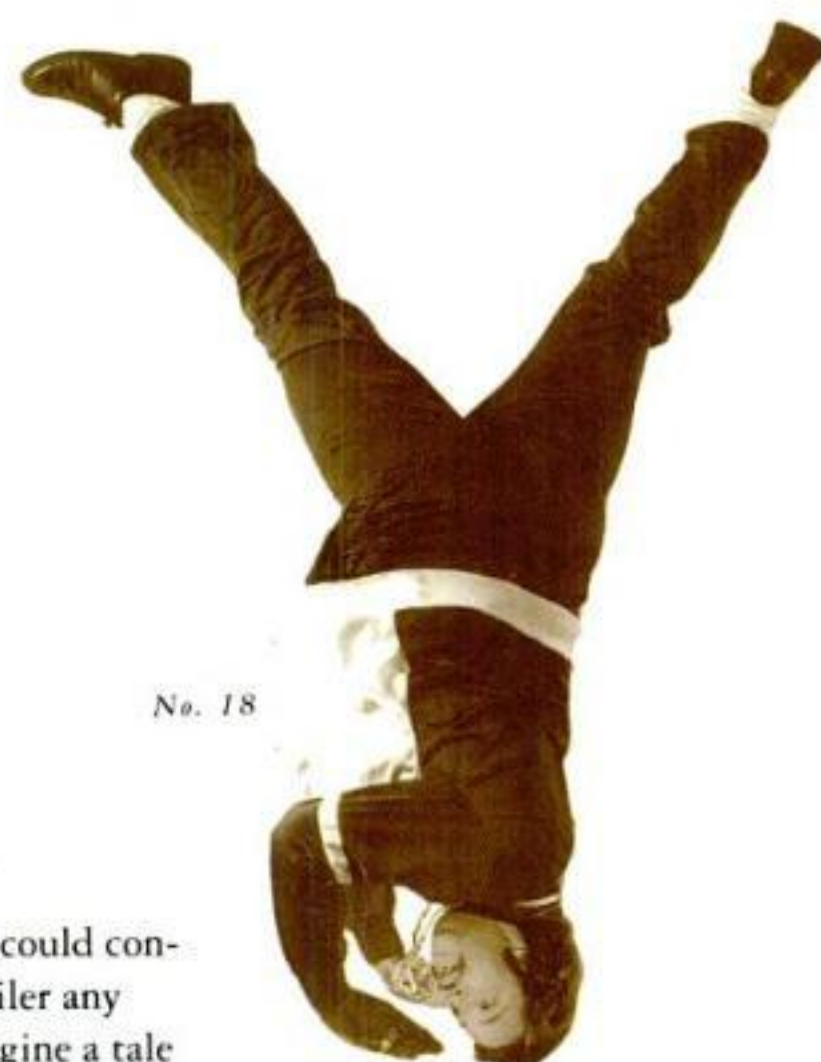
No. 29

No. 50



No. 37

No. 97



No. 18



No. 10



No. 28

No. 72

## S&L HELL

No hack novelist could concoct a potboiler any sleazier: imagine a tale that involves corruption, venality, cowardice and stupidity on the part of **1989 RANK: 58** a president, a vice president, a speaker of the House, a secretary of the Treasury, Congress generally and five senators in particular—not to mention the mob, the CIA, the president's son and the bargain acquisition of 15 insolvent thrifts by a shifty character actually named Mr. Fail. No, such a story would be too cynical, too wildly implausible, too bleak an estimation of the intelligence and integrity of America's ►



No. 7

No. 56



leaders. **MITIGATING FACTOR:** As a nation, we all get to live the happy ending of our own *It's a Wonderful Life*, where every American pitches in as much as \$5,000 to save the embattled savings and loans.

**SCORE** .....224.36

## SADDAM HUSSEIN

A grand year for the Iraqi dictator. Hussein admitted that Iraq had chemical weapons; said, "I swear by God we will let our fire eat half of Israel"; got a U.S. senator to agree with him publicly about how terrible journalists are; and hanged a British journalist accused of spying. He then topped himself with a blitzkrieg annexation of Kuwait, changing the balance of power in the Middle East so thoroughly

that he invited comparisons with Hitler and Czechoslovakia ("We may have to sacrifice Kuwait as we knew it to get

out of this one," said one Chamberlainish Arab minister). **MITIGATING FACTOR:** Iraq's control of 20 percent of the world's oil might be bad for America, but it's worse for Japan and Germany.

**SCORE** .....222.05

## DONALD TRUMP

Tell us we're dreaming. Tell us the very symbol of greed, vulgarity and bluster didn't really get all that he deserved. Oh, he'll be back — with a monthly budget of \$450,000, a salamander would be back — in all likelihood recast as a never-say-die survivor. But we'll always remember 1990 and what it brought Donald Trump. Or rather what it took from him: his wife, his jet, his yacht, his autonomy, his image, his poor approximation of a soul. Somebody pinch us. **MITIGATING FACTOR:** Trump waited until his back was *absolutely against the wall* before blaming his financial troubles on three Trump Organization executives killed

in a helicopter crash in 1989.

**SCORE** .....221.21

## COLD VICTORY

A long twilight struggle against an implacable enemy, waging wars on frozen peninsulas and in torrid jungles, the whole time keeping all of civilization on the brink of nuclear annihilation, and once it's over, once the enemy collapses and the threat disappears, what happens? *Nothing!* No ticker-tape parades, no thankful prayer services and no sense of what to do next. In Washington, leaders mope about no longer being central players on the world stage, whine about the economic power of established democracies, praise themselves for their prudence and caution, and prepare to spend the peace dividend on the savings-and-loan debacle they created. All our contingency plans, it seems, went into preparing for a nuclear war, and none into imagining peace.

**SCORE** .....215.64



ment for his race's genetic superiority. A Korean grocer in

Brooklyn was accused of assaulting a black customer, and a hysterical boycott ensued. White columnist Jimmy Breslin called an *Asian Newsday* colleague a "slant-eyed . . . yellow cur." A star athlete at Columbia University stunned a varsity-dinner audience by complaining that Jews had too much power on campus and offended him because they don't believe in Jesus Christ. Black lawyer C. Vernon Mason said New York's black mayor, David Dinkins, "ain't got no African left in him. He's got too many yarmulkes on his head." **MITIGATING FACTOR:** When President Bush's top Soviet-affairs adviser, a black woman, was shoved out of a receiving line by a Secret Service agent during Gorbachev's visit, an agency spokesman said confidently, "I'm sure it had nothing to do with her gender or her race."

**SCORE** .....200.60



## IT'S MY FIRST AMENDMENT

The First Amendment was invoked left and right and inconsistently: some people who supported Robert Mapplethorpe's artistic expression wanted to silence Axl Rose or Andy Rooney or subway beggars; the Florida sheriff who went after the 2 Live Crew album ignored equally foul records by Andrew Dice Clay; and many of the same people who disapprove of symbolic red dye thrown by right-to-lifers approve of symbolic red dye thrown by antifur activists.

**SCORE** .....200.18

## GEORGE BUSH, LUCKY GUY

Gosh, it's just been — so many things — fortunate, fortunate, we can tell you that. But what we're saying — trying to say — well, the Placebo President has sure been a lucky guy. We can tell you that, send that one right out. Because — and we can supply those specifics too. A lot of very useful people around — and events — him: Sununu, Thornburgh — bad cops, and the president looking good. Eastern Europe, Sandinista defeat — take the credit, absolutely. Dukakis — and Dukakis has got a little cloud above his head, he's Butch Cassidy on a bike, raindrops keep fallin' on his head, so we all feel lucky it went this way and not — not in a counter mode. Noriega won't stick, Iran-contra didn't, the tax-revenue thing — got to realize it doesn't matter, got to understand that people just don't care. Iraq? Will not stand, kick some butt. Strategy? Agenda? The man — and this is what he set out to — catches fish.

**SCORE** .....188.04

## GEORGE STEINBRENNER

How can you top the 1980s, the first decade since the 1910s that the Yankees failed to win a World Series? Start by giving \$40,000 to a gambler; claim the payment was made "out of the goodness of [your] heart." Trade your star slugger. Send spies into the visiting team's clubhouse late at night to check for altered bats. Watch your team lose more games than any other, including one in which your pitcher hurls a no-hitter; finally, get banned forever.

**SCORE** .....185.77

## "There is a minimal risk of conflict"

— Heino Kopietz, senior Middle East analyst, on the possibility of Iraq's invading Kuwait, in *The Times* (London), July 26, 1990

## RACISM

City College of New York professors Leonard Jeffries (who is black) and Michael Levin (who is white) each put forth a pseudo-scholarly argu-





## HUBBLE TROUBLE

**9** A 13-year spendorama culminates in fuzzy, indecipherable transmissions. Yet NASA, which blew \$1.5 billion, claims it would have cost too much to test for the scope's flaws before lift-off.

**SCORE** .....180.27

## CARDINAL O'CONNOR

**10** In a ferocious pursuit of headlines, the publicity-hungry prelate disclosed that exorcisms had been performed in Queens, confided that he'd counseled Ivana Trump, bad-mouthed environmentalists on Earth Day and floated the idea of excommunicating Catholic politicians who support abortion rights. **MITIGATING FACTOR:** According to a *Daily News* poll, 41 percent of faithful Catholics are "not at all" guided by O'Connor's dictates on abortion.

**SCORE** .....176.09

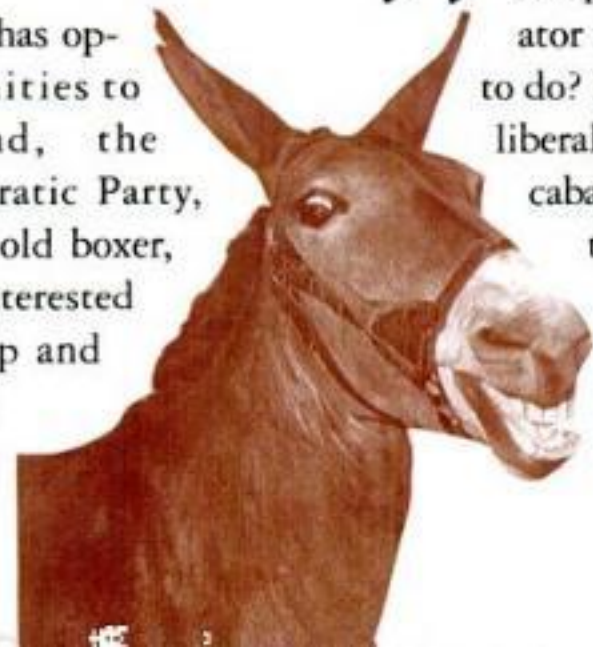
## JOHN SUNUNU, LARGE AND IN CHARGE

**11** The tuna-size, potato-shaped, Brillo-haired surrogate president of the United States is a smug, snipety, self-satisfied know-it-all who has happily acted as the president's bad cop for everybody from Congress to the Cabinet. A throwback to Reagan's first term, Sununu is a master of condescension, never quite hiding the contempt in which he holds any challenger he thinks is dumber than he—that is, everyone.

**SCORE** .....174.11

## FUNCTIONARIES WITHOUT A CAUSE

**12** Now that it has opportunities to rebound, the Democratic Party, like a punchy old boxer, seems more interested in covering up and not getting hit. When Pat



Moynihan proposed a Social Security tax cut that would have had wide appeal, his colleagues fluttered away. When Dick Gephardt slammed Bush for his cautious spectating during the disintegration of the Communist bloc, no partisan supported him. Two years before the 1988 New Hampshire primary, nine Democrats were jockeying to take on Bush; a mere 19 months before the 1992 campaign begins, Democrats are excited that Mario Cuomo has deigned to think about it.

**SCORE** .....173.98

"Easily the finest mirror ever made"

— NASA's William Fastie  
on the Hubble  
Space Telescope,  
June 1989

## BRUCE RITTER

**13** A Frank Capra movie without a final reel. The worst part about discovering that the saint-in-waiting had human desires and human propensities to misuse available cash to help friends and family came when Ritter ended up being defended by nothing more than his cult of personality. Meanwhile, the public turned cynical, and Covenant House—which was always larger and more important than Ritter—suffered the damage.

**SCORE** .....171.22

## JESSE HELMS

**14** Communism is declawed, and a reelection campaign is approaching—what's a contemptible right-wing senator from North Carolina to do? He might invent a liberal-homosexual-artistic cabal that's wasting our tax dollars and go after its members as if his political life depended on it,

which it probably does. **MITIGATING FACTOR:** Helms's interesting new euphemisms. What could "Jesse Jackson's crowd" and "the bloc vote" possibly mean?

**SCORE** .....169.99

## DOING THE TAWANA

**15** A black student in Atlanta ransacked her own dorm room, wrote slurs on her walls and sent herself death threats. Two Israeli Jews desecrated 250 Jewish graves in Haifa, supposedly to unite Israelis against the Arabs. French neo-Nazi skinheads desecrated a Catholic cemetery to make it appear that Jews had retaliated for the unearthing of Jewish corpses in Carpentras. But the champion do-it-yourself victim: Boston white guy Charles Stuart.

**SCORE** .....167.13

## EXXON VS. EARTH

**16** Just when Prince William Sound seemed on the verge of ecological recovery and we thought maybe we'd put the tiger back in our tank, Exxon announced a laughable countersuit against the state of Alaska, charging that it had obstructed the corporation's cleanup efforts. Additional villainy followed, notably the pouring of 567,000 gallons of heating oil into the Arthur Kill on Staten Island.

**SCORE** .....166.49

## THE FLAG HUBBUB

**17** Just how stupid are we? For a full year the squabble over the proposed Flag Protection Act consumed Congress (utterly), the public (partially) and the low-gear mind of our president (naturally)—as if the nation had nothing more important to do. And even after the Supreme Court ruled the act unconstitutional, the principles of the flag-protection movement are still alive—and are in all likelihood a potent campaign issue. *That's* how stupid.

**SCORE** .....165.47



## AL SHARPTON

**18** He tried, and failed, to arrange for his impending jail term to coincide with Nelson Mandela's arrival in New York. He tried, and failed, to involve himself in the Marion Barry trial. He inserted himself into the wilding trial for a day, bringing Tawana Brawley in tow. Even when jailed on Rikers Island, he got some ink by complaining about having to sleep on a mattress used by one of the Bensonhurst rioters.

**SCORE** .....164.86

## OUTING

**19** Outing—radical, arrogant, a disturbance of the peace—is regarded the way any act of a militant minority is: as an offense by those comfortable with the status quo, as an act of liberation by those aggrieved. According to the New York City Gay and Lesbian Anti-Violence Project, attacks on gay men and women in the New York area increased 122 percent during the first five months of 1990, and these are only the most extreme acts inflicted on homosexuals. Still, outing is a hard, cold solution that champions a victimized group by victimizing an individual within that group. It would be a better world if people weren't ashamed to come out of the closet, if the news media didn't abet hetero masquerades, if sexual preference mattered to no one. It's hard to see how outing is making this a better world.

**SCORE** .....162.21





## THE DECLINING STANDARDS OF CLASSINESS

**20** It goes to show how scarce ordinary good behavior has become that Marla Maples is praised for not discussing Donald Trump's love secrets in public, Ivana Trump is exalted for surviving a public dumping, John and Pat Kluge are honored for parting without bitter public recriminations, and Cindy Adams feels obliged to make Imelda Marcos sound heroic for vowing to "see this trial through," even though a trial is not ordinarily optional for someone who has chosen to plead innocent to a federal indictment.

SCORE .....160.55

## BUM-BASHING

**21** Compassion for the homeless has crested. In New York, police threw beggars off the subways and derelicts out of the terminals. In San Francisco, cops ran homeless people off Civic Center plaza. And Washington, D.C., rescinded its six-year-old guarantee of shelter.

SCORE .....158.79



OUT OF SIGHT,  
OUT OF HAIR

**22** The suspension has become the media executive's remedy of choice for that headache caused by an imprudent high-profile employee. The Zoo Crew at Washington's WAVA-FM gets out of hand? *Suspend 'em!* Jimmy Breslin falls into a time warp, thinks it's 1948 and insults women and Asians? *Suspend him!* Andy Rooney says what he thinks about blacks and homosexuals? *Suspend him!*

**MITIGATING FACTOR:** The airwaves were Rooney-free for three weeks.

SCORE .....157.12

## COLLEGE PRESIDENTS RUN AMOK

**23** Boston University's maniacal John Silber ran for governor of Massachusetts and in the process compared Jesse Jackson to Hitler. Richard Berendzen of American University resigned after 30-odd obscene telephone calls were traced to him. And Chase N. Peterson of the University of Utah resigned after he was found to have covertly diverted university funds to the school's controversial cold-fusion lab.

SCORE .....151.34

"Everyone's heard tales about how poor D.T. is leveraged out, how even his Taj is up for grabs because he needs money. Bullbleep... This guy is sitting on 4 billion. Cash. Billion with a b. In terms of liquid assets he could pour out maybe 5-billion. That's billion with a b"

—Cindy Adams in  
the *New York Post*,  
May 22, 1990

## PAINLESS MIDDLE-CLASS CONCERN

**24** Where the pivotal social issues were once peace, freedom and poverty, now the concerns are real but definitively middle-class matters (ecology, arts funding, inequality in far-off lands). And



so, Earth Day became a big,

polite, Live Aid-like feel-good garden party, and commitment to civil rights meant getting photographed with Nelson Mandela.

SCORE .....146.82

## HEAVY LAYERS OF FLACK

**25** In ancient times gods would not speak to mortals—Zeus spoke to Hermes, who then spoke to people. So it is today: gods (and what are Donald and Ivana if not divine?) speak to their respective Hermeses (and what can we politely call John Scanlon, Howard Rubenstein and Peggy Siegal if not Hermeses?), who then speak to Liz and Cindy (our Homers!), who finally enlighten us. Even the Roman Catholic church, which somehow got its message across for 2,000 years, hired the Hill and Knowlton PR firm to help spread the anti-abortion word.

SCORE .....139.07



## JON PETERS AND PETER GUBER

**26** How much should we fear Japan when Sony pays a total of \$1 billion for two credit-hogging schmoozers who have very little hands-on studio-management experience; who, along with



their bona fide hits, green-lighted *Who's That Girl* and *Clan of the Cave Bear*, who in fiscal 1989 lost \$19.2 million on revenues of \$23.7 million; who in one of their first acts as heads of Columbia Pictures named as studio president Frank Price, the man who passed on *E.T.*?

SCORE .....135.91



## THE ENTRAPMENT OF MARION BARRY

**27** Catching a notorious and indiscreet drug user may seem simple, but after wasting millions of dollars, authorities concluded that catching Marion Barry could be accomplished only by the unseemliest of means: using an attractive woman—an ex-lover of the mayor's who was in trouble with the law and eager to finesse a deal—to drag him virtually by his crotch to a hotel room, where she shoved a crack pipe in his face until he consented.

SCORE .....128.16

## MARION BARRY

**28** Getting caught doesn't make you a martyr; it just proves you're as incompetent a "street dude" as you are a mayor and husband.

SCORE .....127.61

## SI'S BYE-BYES

**29** The Condé Nast body count: *Details*'s Annie Flanders, plus its staff and editorial identity; *Tatler*'s Emma Soames, plus its staff and editorial identity; *British GQ*'s Paul Keers; *Self*'s Anthea Disney. Over in books: Random House's Robert Bernstein; Pantheon's Andre Schiffrin. "I've just been me," said S. I. Newhouse.

SCORE .....127.01



## ATTACK OF THE KILLER BASKETBALL SHOES

30

We don't know how inner-city youths became enamored of the sneaks-and-team-jacket look long favored by pudgy Meadows-tail-gating accountants, but suddenly kids were stealing these garments

from one another and sometimes killing one another in the process. This fomented a controversy, not about the impoverished, sneaker-driven economy of the inner city but about whether shoe-company advertising creates this homicidal fever, and whether Spike Lee and Michael Jordan are culpable for the violence. In recent years the same garment envy led to waves of violence against people wearing leather jackets or gold chains. So — *is it the shoes?* Nah.

SCORE .....125.72

## THE ASSHOLE DEFENSE

31

Was it desperation, cunning or simply uncommon candor that prompted defense attorneys to verbally abuse their clients? Leona Helmsley, Bensonhurst's Keith Mondello, Imelda Marcos and *Exxon Valdez* captain Joseph Hazelwood were acknowledged to be, respectively, "a bitch," "a jerk," "a world-class shopper" and a guy

with "bad breath" by their own lawyers, all of whom echoed the saving-grace coda: *but that doesn't make them felons!*

SCORE .....122.00



## THE YANKEEFICATION OF THE METS

32

Quick! Name a team that treats its veterans shabbily, trades away talented young players, makes quick-fix deals that put erratic washouts into the lineup, endures the trials of its sulky star outfielder and renews its manager's lucrative contract only to

jettison him at the first sign of a losing record! The '79 Yanks? Nope. Meet the Mets. **MITIGATING FACTOR:** Buddy Harrelson has the team winning — but then Bob Lemon had some success before the Yankees entered their Decade of Lean.

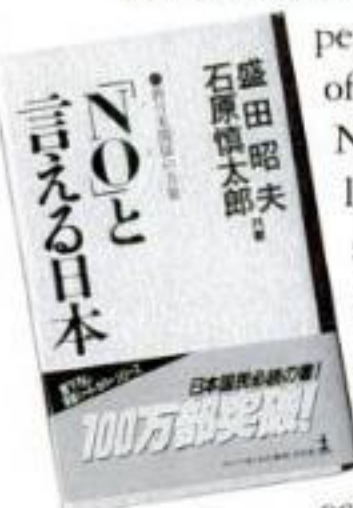
SCORE .....118.93

## NIPPOPHOBIA

33

This year race-driven anxiety about Japan was manifested mostly in subtle but pointed ways: naming the laughable boss in *Back to the Future Part II* "Fujitsu" typified our small, inadequate reactions to Japanese success. But when the Mitsubishi Estate Company bought Rockefeller Center, America reacted as though Christmas would have to be canceled. The sale fed our national paranoia, as did the Sony buyout of Columbia, as did the Japanese developer who spent \$51.3 million for a Picasso that most of us have never seen, as did reading about *The Japan That Can Say "No"*, a book co-written by Sony's Akio Morita that berates Americans for their decadence. Perhaps we

perceive the influx of VCRs and Nintendos as the latest in a line of sneak attacks on Americans, and Japan's strenuous challenge to our dwindling economic supremacy as something they ought to



have sworn off once we defeated them. If only we could face these forays with the same determination that the Japanese displayed 44 years ago when Douglas MacArthur casually informed their emperor that he was no longer a god.

SCORE .....117.20

## ANDREW DICE CLAY

34

Banned forever from MTV, boycotted by a *Saturday Night Live* cast member and a musical guest, packing the Garden, weeping on *Arsenio* — you'd think the Diceman would at least have the grace to be funny. But no, Clay is simply this year's Mort Downey, headed straightaway for the pop-curiosity scrap heap.

SCORE .....114.34



"There's not much else we can do. He's basically won"

— a U.S. official on the fate of Manuel Noriega, as quoted in *Newsweek*, September 4, 1989

## POP PARFUMEURS

35

Float like a butterfly, smell like Ali! Whereas last year's celebrity scents were eponymous star vehicles — Deneuve, Sophia, Misha — this year's big-name *parfums* tend to reflect their namesakes' whimsy (Debbie Gibson's Electric Youth, Jaclyn Smith's California), profun-



dity (Priscilla Presley's Moments) or ultramachismo (Julio Iglesias's Only, Billy Dee Williams's Undeniable). But the best is yet to come: Elvis — the fragrance — debuts in 1991.

SCORE .....111.16

## THE EXCESSIVELY LONG ARM OF AMERICAN LAW

36

Imelda Marcos stood trial in New York for crimes her dead husband committed in the Philippines. Manuel Noriega faces prosecution in Miami for atrocities committed in Panama. And Joseph Patrick Doherty, an IRA operative, languishes in a Manhattan jail despite at least seven court decisions ordering his release.

SCORE .....101.03

## THE WARREN GLUT

37

The (supposedly) reticent star's responses to regiments of interviewers were more autistic than interesting and would have been unpublishable had they been uttered by, say, Buddy Hackett. But published and broadcast they were. Such a fuss. As Beatty would say, "... Uh ..."

SCORE .....97.25

## SECESSION FEVER

38

Quebec wants out of Canada, Czechs are at odds with Slovaks, and the Lombard League wants Italy to become a Beatle boot. And with Lithuania, Latvia and even Boris Yeltsin's Republic of Russia clamoring for autonomy, and with Staten Island and Malibu agitating for release from their

respective metropolises, the world may be moving toward a nineteenth-century Balkan-style arrangement of nation-states. Viva Bosnia and Herzegovina! Serbia shall rise again!

SCORE .....96.80



## "NEWS"

**39** Despite last year's outcry against simulated news (have you seen any fake Felix Blochs milling around on videotape lately?), television programmers couldn't resist toying with viewers' minds during sweeps periods. WABC-TV's horrific *Eyewitness News* team used real detectives to try to solve the *Twin Peaks* murder and followed *thirty-something* with real doctors talking about Nancy's ovarian cancer. WNBC's *News 4 New York* baited its *L.A. Law* viewers during newsbreaks by saying a star of the show had committed suicide — only to reveal, at the tail end of the news, that the deceased was in fact an actor who had appeared in only a few episodes.

**SCORE** .....94.11

## DIET EXTREMISM

**40** Following examples set by Ed Koch, Tommy Lasorda and Mel Tormé, 20 million fat Americans spent \$1 billion last year on low-calorie powdered shakes. Even more alarming, putatively responsible scientists suggested that controlled starvation — 1,260 (women) to 1,500 (men) calories a day, max — could extend the human lifespan to 170 years.

**SCORE** .....91.96

## PAGING ATTORNEY GENERAL ROBERT STACK!

**41** Will affluent, directionless 22-year-olds soon opt for bail-bondsmanships rather than law degrees? Considering that *America's Most Wanted* and *Unsolved Mysteries* have helped nail more than 140 fugitives while John Gotti, Marion Barry, Keith Mondello, Adnan Khashoggi and Imelda Marcos beat serious raps, it's not the worst thing that could happen.

**SCORE** .....87.83

## SAMMY SORROW

**42** When Sammy checked into the Big Room in the Sky, who didn't say, "Stop the world, I want to get off"? *People* magazine cashed in with a memorial edition; ABC rebroadcast its *Sammy Davis Jr.'s 60th Anniversary Celebration*; and Warner Books, the paperback publisher of *Yes I Can* and *Why Me?*, took out a maudlin ad that read, "Sammy, the spotlight is still yours." **MITIGATING FACTOR:** The day of Sammy's funeral, Frank Sinatra referred to him as a "boy" to TV reporters.

**SCORE** .....87.24



## LIFE AS A METAPHOR FOR BASEBALL

**43** We had come to expect the annual gush of fulsome opening-day prose extolling the summer game, but last spring an unprecedented 21 baseball titles arrived at bookstores, not to mention further gushings from such he-manly guys as Stephen King ("In Little League, anything can and often does happen"), Garrison Keillor ("This is ball, ladies and gentlemen") and George Will ("Baseball teaches a kind of moral equipoise that is important in politics").

**SCORE** .....85.02

## FUDDY-DUDDY REACTIONS TO RAP

**44** It's not music — it's just debased rhythms and a lot of shouting that inspires sexually deviant activities, treats women as sex objects, encourages protest and rebellion, and always threatens to turn concerts into occasions for hysterical behavior in which somebody could get



killed. Of course, we mean rap. Did you think we meant those old songs the Rolling Stones played on their Steel Wheels tour?

**SCORE** .....84.89

## MANIAMANIA

**45** Last year *Batman* taught business executives a lesson — no, not to turn on an enormous searchlight when trouble arises, but to merchandise like crazed wolverines. And so, more than a million *Simpsons* T-shirts are sold weekly, and 300 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles items — 300! — have been licensed. **MITIGATING FACTOR:** The public drew the line at *Jetsons — The Movie*.

**SCORE** .....83.65

"[Baseball commissioner Fay Vincent] could levy any penalty including expulsion from the game. However, he is not expected to give Steinbrenner such a severe penalty"

— Murray Chass in  
*The New York Times*,  
July 30, 1990

## TRIUMPH OF THE ALSO-RANS

**47** No matter how shopworn you are, if you hang around New York's Democratic Party long enough, you'll end up with work. Liz Holtzman, beaten in her 1980 Senate race, ineffectual as a D.A., became comptroller. Andrew Stein, who chickened out of a Senate bid, won the powerless job of City Council president. Mark Green, a loser in campaigns for both houses of Congress, became consumer-affairs commissioner. And David Dinkins, a bland 25-year veteran of minor posts, became mayor. Next: comeback bids by Carol Bellamy and the unsinkable Herman Badillo.

**SCORE** .....80.14

## NEIL BUSH, DADDY'S BOY

**48** As a director of Silverado Savings and Loan, Neil delivered big loans to investors in his oil business; in one case he allowed a developer who had lent him \$3 million to default on an \$8 million loan from Silverado. Cost of the Silverado bailout to taxpayers: \$1 billion.

**SCORE** .....76.77



## THE "WAR" ON DRUGS

**49** Last year drug czar William Bennett set out to make Washington a showcase of the antidrug effort. This year crack went on sale around the corner from his office, correctional officers in a D.C. jail admitted to being addicts, and Marion Barry demonstrated his familiarity with a crack pipe. All of this left Bennett, whose public life is endangered, to proclaim that he had no moral problem with decapitating drug dealers.

**SCORE** .....74.34

## 20TH-CENTURY GOING-OUT-OF-BUSINESS SALE

**46** Across the Sun Belt, thousands of properties owned by S&Ls were put up for sale by the government. In Eastern Europe, formerly state-owned businesses asked for Western investment. And auctiongoers got great deals on Drexel Burnham Lambert's office furnishings and John Belushi's golf clubs.

**SCORE** .....81.20



## AND FOR OUR READERS ABROAD...

**50** Britain: the poll tax; the Hillsborough Stadium squishings; the House of Lords veto of future Nazi-war-criminal prosecutions; Margaret Thatcher. **Poland:**



Cardinal Glemp's saying Jews should stop using their media influence to push Poland around. **Japan:** Koreans' being described as infections in the national bloodstream. **France:** the National Front's leader's calling Nazi gas chambers a minor detail. **West Germany:** the revived career of David Hasselhoff. **MITIGATING FACTOR:** **Canada:** Harold Ballard's death. **SCORE** .....73.20

## ROTTING INFRASTRUCTURE

**51** Repair work on the Queensboro Bridge closed two lanes of traffic for more than 21 months; a ceiling in the Ansonia Hotel collapsed and killed a woman in a croissant shop; 600 water mains broke in fiscal 1990; and New York's budget-crunched manual-street-sweeping force dwindled to 282 sweepers from a 1987 high of 1,382. **SCORE** .....73.20

## COKE'S MAGICANS

**52** The Coca-Cola Company's misbegotten \$100-million promotion went south when its Rube Goldberg-ishly gimmicky MagiCans — designed to eject cash or prize certificates — malfunctioned: a flight attendant mistook a winning can for a

bomb and an eleven-year-old imbibed some acrid MagiCan ballast water.

**SCORE** .....71.69

"Only when the beech trees bear apples and reeds bear flowers"

— Nicolae Ceaușescu on the possibility for change in Romania, as quoted in *U.S. News & World Report*, December 4, 1989

## GIMMICK CRIMINALS

**53** Finally, even madmen go postmodern: conceptual crime. Evidently inspired by the funny papers, Dartman lurked in midtown, casually terrorizing female passersby. Evidently inspired by the recent spate of seventies revivalism, the Zodiac Killer handwrote goofy, cryptic letters to the *New York Post*. And evidently inspired by — *who?* *The Marx Brothers?* *Buñuel?* — a group of black teenage girls with pins went around pricking affluent-looking white women. **MITIGATING FACTOR:** New NEA regulations probably mean the perpetrators of these activities may never get government funding. **SCORE** .....71.54

## CO-DEPENDENCY

**54** A movement burdened with self-pity and unbearable trendspeak. Some examples: *enabling* (protecting loved ones from the consequences of their problems), *qualifying* (making teary confessions before total strangers) and *mirror work* (standing naked in front of a mirror and saying, "I love you, I love you," five times). **SCORE** .....71.30

## RIP VAN CZECHOSLOVAKIA

**55** Last fall Czechoslovakia shed its Communist skin and sought a return to the heady, *Hair*-like days of 1968's Prague Spring. Vaclav Havel's Civic Forum — the name itself suggests a trippy Berkeley fuzz-guitar combo — swept the elections, and the absurdist playwright assumed power in the manner of Max Frost in *Wild in the Streets*: talking foreign trade with Frank Zappa, denouncing racism with Paul Simon, recruiting the Stones to play Prague and bringing Allen Ginsberg over for May Day. And in an unprecedentedly groovy display of Love Power, the government declared that Czechoslovakia "just won't sell weapons anymore — in one stroke expunging a \$1-billion-a-year industry." **SCORE** .....69.04



## MUCH ADO ABOUT TOM WOLFE

**56** Wolfe's by turns sensible and condescending do-it-my-way essay in Harper's on the future of the novel flushed too many writers from their studies. Publicly tossing in their two cents were Mary Gordon, Jim Harrison, Scott Spencer, Walker Percy, Philip Roth, Alison Lurie, T. Coraghessan Boyle, John Hawkes and Frederick Barthelme. Among their allusions: Little Nell, Lear, Flaubert, Toynbee, "present-day semiotics," the Mauritius Gambit and "the Babbittry of Art in a new, white suit." **SCORE** .....68.90

## SWELL FUNERALS

**57** At funeral services for Steve Rubell, Halston, Laurence Olivier, Jim Henson, Kezia Keeble and Malcolm Forbes, the line between mourning and gawk-

ing disappeared, to the point where the *Times* ran a fashion spread on funeralwear ("They chose a variety of styles... from black biking shorts and a jacket to a velour sweatsuit"), and Sirio Maccioni, owner of Le Cirque, was recruited to help determine who would get into Forbes's velvet-rope affair.

**SCORE** .....66.23

## AL D'AMATO

**58** On the heels of triumphs both national (his participation in the HUD stealathon) and local (his 1989 **RANK:** orchestration of the Ronald-Lauder-for-mayor fiasco), New York's self-described "pothole senator" launched his own Eastern European initiative. Promising to "go toe-to-toe with the myth," D'Amato drove up to the Lithuanian border and barked, "Let me into Latvia!" Then, during the Senate debate about denouncing his fellow Republican David Durenberger, D'Amato repeatedly dozed off. **SCORE** .....65.85



## THE WIFE INDUSTRY

**59** In the Professional Widow Division: Judith Jacklin Belushi's *Samurai Widow* and the rival John Lennon tributes, one being organized by Yoko Ono, one by Cynthia



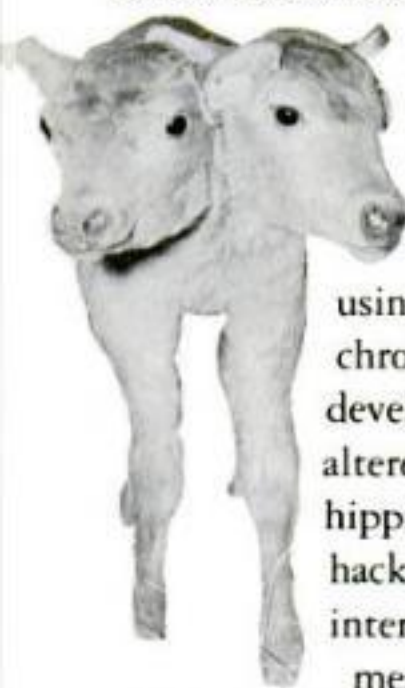
Lennon. In the Wholly Offensive Division: *Esquire's* "The Secret Life of the American Wife" issue ("Her bra — what *really* keeps it up?"). In the Golddigger/Trophy Wife Division: Crown Publishing's *Seconds* ("The new novel about second wives who finish first"), *People* magazine's highly original "How to Marry a Billionaire" cover and Georgette Mosbacher's very existence. **SCORE** .....65.85



## BRAVE NEW WORLD

**60** What in blazes is the scientific community up to? Some computer jocks factored a 155-digit number.

What's the application? More-secure computer codes for banks. Elsewhere, a doctor



invented a suicide machine; Texas researchers, using human chromosomes, developed gene-altered cows; and hippie computer hackers created an interactive environment simulator

called virtual reality.

SCORE .....65.68

## CANADA: A GOOD LAND GOES BAD

**61** Will sensible crepe-soled shoes and lumpy parkas soon become cinematic shorthand for Pure Evil, like German accents in movies of the 1940s? It seems possible, considering how Canadians have lately junked their bland, orderly image: the government wobbled; Robert Campeau bought Bloomingdale's and sank it; go-go Garth Drabinsky lost control of the Cineplex Odeon movie-theater chain; a deranged Montreal man shot 14 students dead last December; baseball spectators in the stands of Toronto's SkyDome could see live sex acts being performed in the adjacent hotel; and American public television aired a drama about Canada's brutal, culture-obliterating Indian Education Act of 1925.

SCORE .....64.32

## NEW KIDS ON THE BLOCK

**62** Did the Monkees seem this unfathomably worthless to our parents in 1966?

SCORE .....63.71



## RICHARD THORNBURGH

**63** The petulant, leak-obsessed attorney general is no Ed Meese, but consider these embarrassments: the resignation in disgust of his capable second-in-command, the appropriation of a jet seized from drug kingpins, and, for Thornburgh himself, the privilege of being the first attorney general ever to take a lie detector test.

**MITIGATING FACTOR:** So much for his presidential aspirations.

SCORE .....62.64

"I could hardly find any citizens who said they wanted a reunified, single Germany. Perhaps in the far-off future, said a very few. Definitely not now"

— Carl Bernstein in  
*Time*, January 22, 1990

## THE TREND FOR NINETIES TRENDS

**64** The apple dropped in Times Square at midnight last December 31, the champagne corks popped, and all things eighties — lap-top computers, LBOs,

arugula — were suddenly out of style, replaced by Dutch-oven cookery, vacations by the Hudson Bay and home midwifery: in other words, things that are consummately nineties. Did you feel the difference?

SCORE .....62.16

## ART TERRORISM

**65** Amsterdam: a man wielding a spray can of sulfuric acid vandalized Rembrandt's *Night Watch*. Boston: thieves traipsed off with \$100-million worth of art from the Gardner Museum. Texas: missing masterpieces of German religious art were discovered among a rather secretive vet's effects. Philadelphia: Sylvester Stallone hired a lawyer to lobby to get the *Rocky* statue permanently installed outside the Philadelphia Museum of Art.

SCORE .....61.97

## THE FRAT-BOY-IFICATION OF FOREIGN POLICY

**66** At first it seemed refreshing in a nutty way — *so hands-on!* — when the president would ring up Mubarak or Mitterand just to give a friendly *Howdy!* But then George Bush, the quintessential frat brother, made overtures to the murderous Li Peng and predicated America's relationship with the USSR on his friendship with the very dicey Gorbachev. Sure, it's nice to have friends in this crazy, mixed-up world, but foreign policy should be based on clearly articulated principles and interests — if only to give the vice president, a DePauw Deke, some clue about what to do should the president drop dead.

SCORE .....61.21

## THE ADVERTISING AGE

**67** Commercials before the feature in movie theaters. Commercials on video-cassettes. Two dozen "product placements" in *Back to the Future Part II* (not plugs but "creative decisions," according to a marketing consultant), even more in *Total Recall*, and, weirdest of all, Tom Cruise's use of Sweet 'n' Low packets to explain stock-car racing to Nicole Kidman in *Days of Thunder's* obligatory bedroom scene.

SCORE .....61.00

## TELEVISION DEATH THROES

**68** As the Big Three's combined viewer share fell to 66 percent (it was 92 percent just eleven years ago) and revenues for pay-cable leveled off, we were left to wonder, *What, if not watching television, are Nielsen families doing?* ABC and NBC, wondering the same thing, decided to adjust the Nielsen ratings under a new system that is expected to put up more advertiser-friendly numbers. And at CBS, network earnings may drop by more than 60 percent.



**MITIGATING FACTOR:** NBC was so desperate that it aired *SPY Magazine Presents How to Be Famous*.

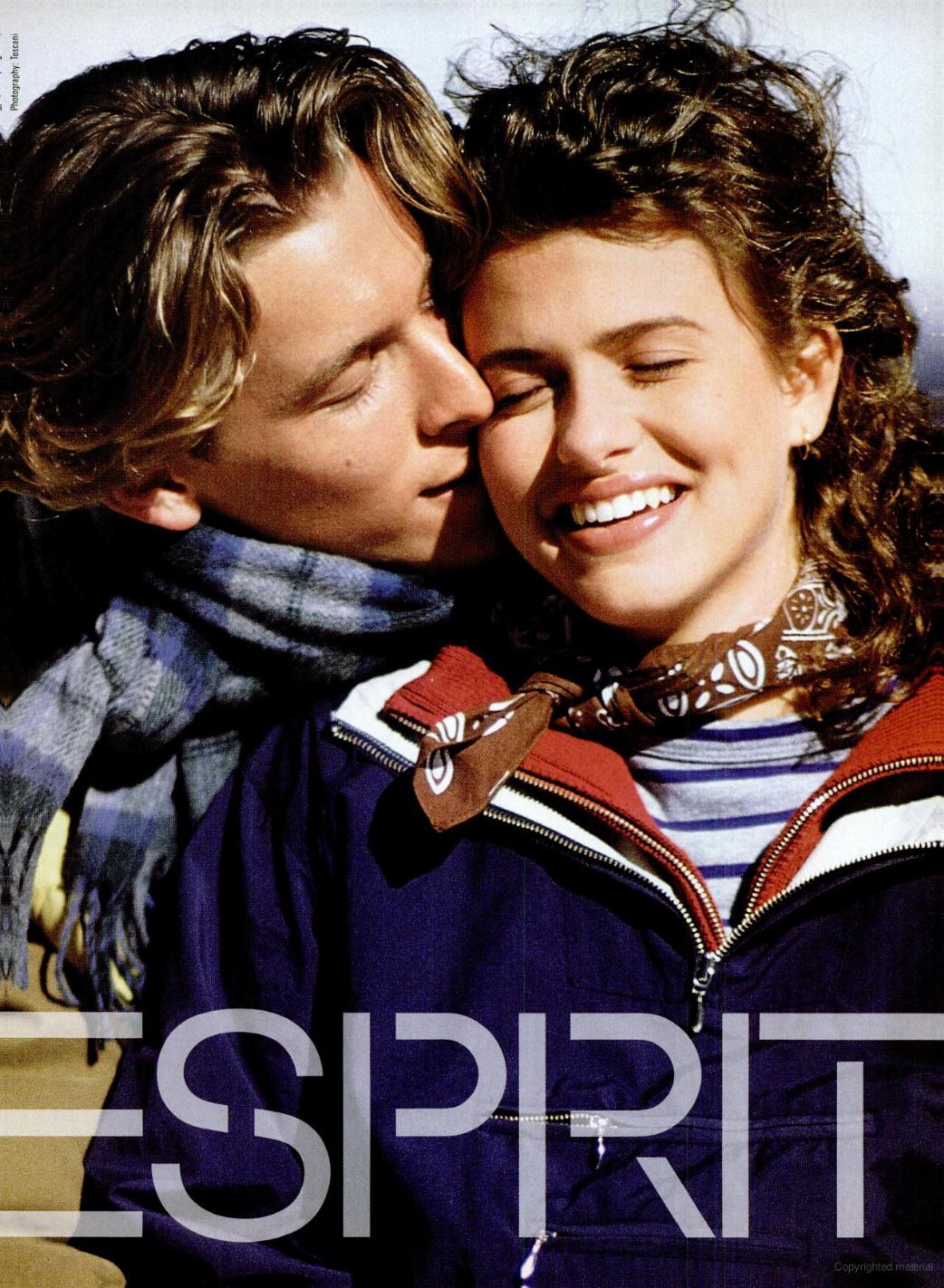
SCORE .....60.80

## DRAGGED-OUT NEWS

**69** Ivan Boesky, once consigned to prison, returned to testify against former cronies; the Iran-contra affair, presumed settled with Poindexter's conviction, got prolonged when a judge overturned North's conviction; and Warhol post-mortemizing continued with the publication of Bob Colacello's *Holy Terror: Andy Warhol Close Up*.

**MITIGATING FACTOR:** More Nixon!  
SCORE .....60.44





Photography: Toscani

# ESPRIT



## ANDREW LLOYD WEBBER

**70** "[The] apotheosis of vulgarity," said critic Mimi Kramer of Webber's *Aspects of Love*, but she might just as easily have been talking about how he ended his marriage to Sarah Brightman — private business, really — by faxing an announcement of their dissolution to the press and, for good measure, mentioning the name of his mistress.

SCORE .....60.35

## EIN REICH

**71** Germany today is nothing like Germany in 1933. Just because the country is still struggling with its culpability for provoking a world war; just because it's led by a chancellor who has promised to reunify the fatherland and lead it to preeminence; just because that chancellor concluded a one-on-one pact with a Soviet dictator on matters of "mutual security" — well, none of these are reasons to conclude that history is repeating itself, or that there's anything wrong with the wartime allies' agreeing to every German demand in order to keep the big, new, confident power ... appeased.

SCORE .....60.12

## TODAYS OF OUR LIVES (NBC, WEEKDAYS, 7:00 A.M.)

**72** After anchorman Bryant writes a blisteringly critical memo, Willard, the zany weatherman, refuses to broadcast from the studio. Meanwhile, Dick, an overboyish NBC executive, introduces Deborah, a full-lipped blond bombshell, to edge out Jane, the show's popular and faithful cohost. As Deborah alienates the female viewers she was supposed to attract, Jane leaves, ratings plunge, and Dick falls on his sword. Will Deborah last? Will Joe, a bald

former host who comes back as a third anchor, make the difference? Tune in tomorrow...

SCORE .....59.95

"The show needed some livening up"

— an NBC executive on the promotion of Deborah Norville, as quoted in *Manhattan, inc.*, December 1989

## \$600 MILLION

**73** Mike Milken paid a \$600-million fine for his malefactions. A hotel chain that has brought a racketeering suit against Donald Trump is asking for \$600-million in damages. Clean water for New York City? A filtration plant will cost \$600 million. Clean land? \$600 million is being spent to clean up New York's toxic dumps. Al Davis's proposed cost of returning the Raiders to Oakland? \$600-million. The cost of bringing the NBA to NBC? Guess.

SCORE .....58.78

## THE LOUISIANA STATE LEGISLATURE

**74** The Pelican State's legislature passed one bill that effectively decriminalizes physical assaults on flag burners (you can slug one if you're willing to pay a \$25 fine), another that imposes the nation's tightest restrictions on the content and sale of record albums and another that bans almost all abortions. Did they pass everything? No — a bill

outlawing spousal rape was defeated.

**MITIGATING FACTOR:** David Duke's anti-



affirmative-action bill was killed in the Senate.

SCORE .....58.56

## THE TWIN PEAKS LIFE-STYLE

**75** So now discreet yuppies have their own *Rocky Horror Picture Show*, their nerdish once-a-week obsession, their reason to hold theme parties featuring donuts, pie, eye patches and, in the case of one well-publicized *Peaks* shindig, a woman who watched the final episode from inside a plastic body bag. **MITIGATING FACTOR:** No reports of *Peakie* conventions in Snoqualmie. Yet.

SCORE .....58.11

## LIZ SMITH

**76** She's losing it. Or as she would say, "losing it." Liz hit pay dirt with the Trump marital dissolution, a professional triumph attained by means of her ability to keep her fax machine free for dispatches from Ivana's publicists. Smith went on to defend her partnership with Roger Ailes by ranting in her column that anyone who criticized her was a follower of Hitler. **MITIGATING FACTOR:** "I'm disgusted with my role," she admitted. "I hate myself."

SCORE .....57.60

## EX-POLS AS MOUTHS FOR HIRE

**77** That momentarily popular sitcom stars might cash in as commercial spokespersons isn't surprising — but *politicians*? What are we to believe about Ed Koch, Ronald Reagan and Tip O'Neill? That they bring a set of principles and a keen sense of public duty to their salesmanship of Second Chance Lotto, Fujisankei Communications Group and Amiga com-

puters? Or do we think their votes were for sale as straightforwardly as their endorsements seem to be?

SCORE .....57.29

## BIG STORIES NO ONE CARES ABOUT

**78** Millionaire baseball players locked out! A page-one crisis — until you realize the guys sounding the alarm are frozen sportswriters mooning about losing their annual Florida spring-training sojourn. World Cup soccer! The planet's most important sporting event — and wasn't it something how (yawn) West Germany won on a disputed call? A census undercount! Gosh, you mean we might not be adequately represented in Washington?

SCORE .....57.08

## FAT IN THE HEADLINES

**79** Health-consciousness-on-the-cheap got a boost from Simplex, the Nutra-Sweet Company's synthetic fat product; 700-pound Walter Hudson — formerly 1,400-pound Walter Hudson — declared himself a weight-loss guru and tried to market a line of clothes for mammothly fat women; John Goodman



graduated from TV second banana to big-screen leading man; and Fox TV announced a new series that documents the lives of three sisters who weigh 200 pounds each.

SCORE .....56.68



## LOOPY OP-ED COLUMNISTS

Reading the *Times's* "new"

**80** Op-Ed pages, revamped to appeal to a younger audience, is like watching Grandpop do the limbo at a wedding: you can't help but feel embarrassed for the old duffer. With delusions of hipness, the paper featured as guest columnists KRS-One, Yakov Smirnoff, Henny Youngman, Jackie Mason, a bike messenger and Ronald Reagan's ghostwriter. Not to mention A. M. Rosenthal ("After spending a lifetime baking and eating journalism's bread, I still find it tasty and filling").

SCORE .....56.57

## KIDDIE CULTURE FOR ADULTS

**81** Baby-boomers suddenly have small children, and the first *Sesame Street* generation just entered the work force. Hence graduate-degree holders and quasi-cerebral professionals line up to see *The Little Mermaid* and *The Bear*, and television's most recent prime-time successes are a cartoon and a showcase for home movies.

SCORE .....56.21

## ARCHER DANIELS MIDLAND

**82** ADM, a Big Brother-ish agriconglomerate headed by the weasely influence peddler Dwayne Andreas, airs good-corporate-citizen commercials that lie. One spot, for example, ruminates about how lucky Americans are to have cheap sugar, even though sugar would be cheaper if ADM-supported trade quotas didn't limit sugar imports. Meanwhile, Andreas



dispenses cash to legislators everywhere; he used his influence to greet Mikhail Gorbachev three times during his U.S. visit in May.

SCORE .....55.99

## THE DEMOCRACY HOOK

**83** Leave it to corporate America to single out a joyous world event—the dismantling of the Berlin Wall—and sully it. Scarcely had the Eastern Europeans begun to revel when Pepsico, AT&T and Jovan arrived in Berlin to film gloating, we-capitalists-were-right-all-along ads for the folks back home.

SCORE .....55.63

**"[Gorbachev] won't pull down the Wall. He is as afraid to let the people of East Germany choose as is Erich Honecker"**

—Martin Peretz in

*The New Republic*,

July 10, 1989

## TOO MUCH HARD TIME

**84** Jim Bakker is a fraud and a felon, but sentencing him to 45 years is excessive (Joel Steinberg, who killed his adopted daughter, will serve a paltry 8½ to 25 years). Similarly, Stanley Friedman is a thief and a scoundrel, but 19 years is too much for attempting to perpetrate the sort of fraud that we'd be happy to see George

Segal get away with in a competently directed caper movie. And Paul Cullen was sentenced to 9 years in prison for poisoning Austin's 500-year-old Treaty Oak.

SCORE .....55.45

## EARTHQUAKES

**85** They're bad, they kill people, and they ravage South Pacific island nations. What—did you think we were going to make some callous joke about interrupting the World Series?

SCORE .....55.24

## LADIES OF THE NIGHT

**86** How distant Diane Sawyer's stint as a serious-minded *60 Minutes* correspondent seems now! In fact, it was only 14 months ago that she set up shop at ABC's *PrimeTime Live*. But like free agents who have joined the Yankees, Sawyer, Connie Chung and Mary Alice Williams signed big contracts before realizing they would flounder in ill-defined roles and ultimately become invisible.

SCORE .....55.06



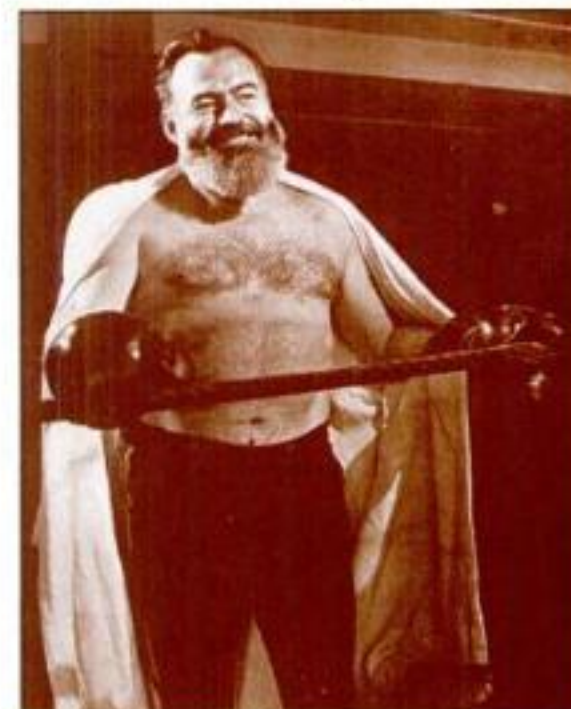
## THE TEXAS GOVERNOR'S RACE

**87** In the Democratic primary, ex-governor Mark White and State Attorney General Jim Mattox accused State Treasurer Ann Richards, a recovering alcoholic, of having used marijuana and cocaine. Richards then accused White of financial improprieties; later, Mattox was anonymously accused of having smoked pot in the seventies. After Richards won the Democratic runoff, her Republican opponent, Clayton Williams, admitted to having slept with prostitutes while in college, and more recently he made a rape joke to reporters.

SCORE .....54.78

## POSTHUMOUS ANTI-SEMITISM

**88** Joseph Campbell was unmasked as an anti-Semite: "The moon," he once quipped, "would be a good place to put the Jews." H. L. Mencken's published diaries revealed his preference for



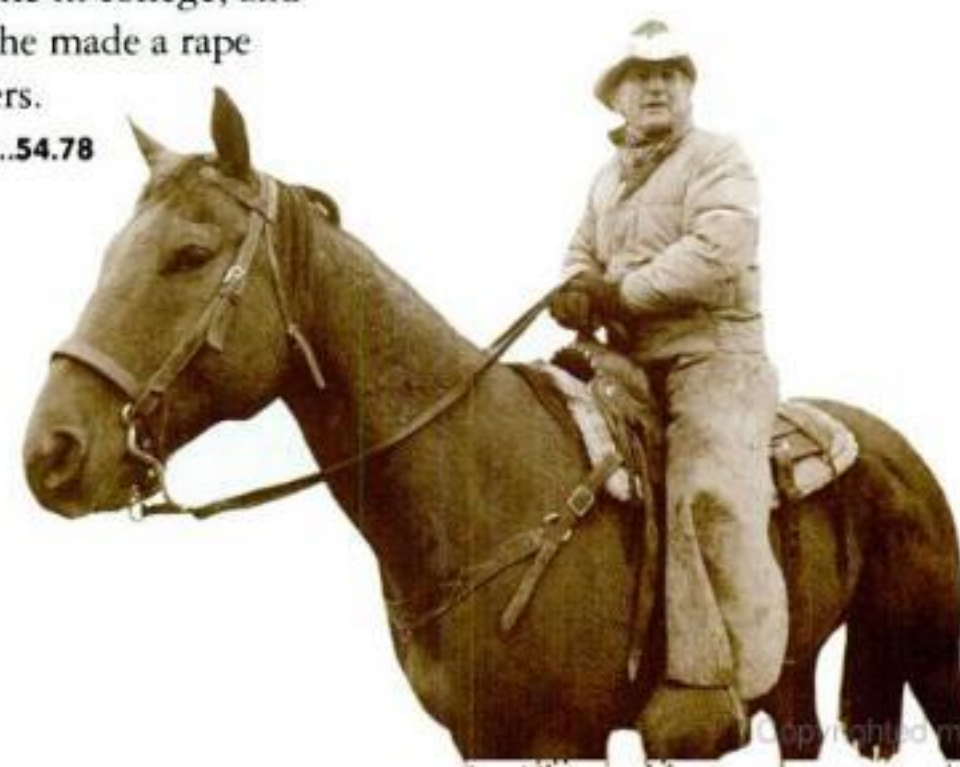
the word *kike*. And in Slim Keith's autobiography, Ernest Hemingway was captured waxing anti-Semitic when Peter Viertel, a Jewish screenwriter, got sick after eating a sea turtle that Papa had slaughtered.

SCORE .....54.49

## NOUVELLE JOURNALISM

**89** Who *isn't* a journalist these days? Ralph Lauren talked about founding a magazine, apparently convinced that the world needed a publication reflecting the "Lauren gestalt." Donald Trump, needless to say, slapped his name on his shuttle's in-flight magazine. Spike Lee guest-edited an entire issue of *Spin*. And the December 1990 issue of *Sassy* is to be produced by readers. **MITIGATING FACTOR:** *U.S. News* proprietor Mort Zuckerman's zeal for the printed page has subsided—he wrote five fewer columns this year.

SCORE .....54.30





## DAN QUAYLE'S SHORT SHELF LIFE

**90** First, astonishment. Then horror, amusement, more amusement, seemingly unending amusement; then guilt, pity, more amusement **23** when he bought the anatomically correct doll in Chile; then tedium; then annoyance at all the growth-in-his-job stories; and now, finally, boredom. Enjoy the respite: soon come the *Will he stay on the ticket?* stories.

SCORE .....54.16

## VANITY ROCK 'N' ROLL

**91** Rock 'n' roll once exposed phonies; now it attracts them. Punk attorney Richard Golub cuts a rap record. Food critic Bryan Miller and Happy Land social club leaseholder Jay (Mr. Kathleen Turner) Weiss play in vanity bands. And tennis brat Mats Wilander wants to cut a vanity single with John Oates. **MITIGATING FACTOR:** Rumors that Bret Easton Ellis would play in a band with Mark Kostabi proved false.

SCORE .....54.00

## ONCE UPON A TIME...

**92** Exhumed from the textbooks and reborn on today's front pages, it's... *history!* Consider: the descendants of a Pennsylvania man who lent money to the Continental Congress during the Revolutionary War want to be paid back with interest—a



total of \$141.6-billion; a \$6.5-million hands-off-till-1990 trust fund created by Benjamin Franklin for the cities of Boston and

Philadelphia lies in limbo as bureaucrats argue over how the money should be spent; Great Britain reopened a 1912 inquiry into the conduct of a ship's captain who had been faulted for not doing enough to rescue the *Titanic's* passengers; and the 92-year-old widow of Bruno Hauptmann, the Lindbergh kidnapper, renewed her campaign to clear her husband's name.

SCORE .....53.93

"Tyson will fight Buster Douglas on February 11 in Tokyo, and Douglas will last about as long as a plate of tuna in a sushi bar"

—Pat Putnam in

*Sports Illustrated*,  
January 29, 1990

## REVOLT AGAINST REVIEWERS

**93** David Hare insisted that Frank Rich had single-handedly closed *The Secret Rapture*. 20th Century Fox briefly ceased screening its films for Siskel and Ebert because of the pair's prerelease panning of *Nuns on the Run*. Restaurateur David Liederman, jolted by Bryan Miller's demoting his Chez Louis from two stars to one, claimed that Miller's medication for an ear infection had affected his sense of taste. And *SPY's* Walter Monheit™ was upbraided by a barman at the Copa.

SCORE .....53.79

## UNDEAD EX- PRESIDENTS

**94** We watched Jimmy Carter involve himself in the Panamanian elections and domestic humanitarianism, saw Ronald Reagan repeatedly plead loss of memory during the Poindexter trial, found out that Richard Nixon cannot say "I love you" to his grandchildren or his wife, and, thanks to Robert Caro, learned that Lyndon Johnson was *bad*.

### MITIGATING

**FACTOR:** No one disturbed the privacy of Palm Springs's famous professional greeter, Gerald Ford.

SCORE .....53.65

## THE INSUFFICIENTLY FORBIDDEN DANCE

Lambada: a craze at the Palladium for a week, a joke in the Catskills for the rest of the century.

**95** SCORE .....53.61

## THE SUBWAY FARE INCREASE

As if commuters aren't addled enough, now they have to brush up on their 15-times table.

**96** SCORE .....53.31

## JOHN-JOHN OVERKILL

**97** He's probably a very nice fellow and may one day enjoy an admirable career in public service. But



right now he's just a good-looking apprentice lawyer.

SCORE .....53.12

## CLASS WAR AT THE DAILY NEWS

**98** All you need to know about the labor situation at the *News* is that management saved \$570,000 by axing 14 electricians while it spent \$4-million a month on such peace-seeking measures as taking job applications from scabs and paying a public-relations firm to get a puff piece on publisher Jim Hoge in *Vanity Fair*. **MITIGATING FACTOR:** Closing the paper would mean we'd get *Hägar the Horrible* out of our lives once and for all.

SCORE .....53.01

THAT  
INTERCEPTION  
PHIL SIMMS  
THREW AT  
THE END OF  
THE FIRST  
HALF OF THE  
RAMS-GIANTS  
PLAYOFF  
GAME

SCORE.....52.13

## 7 DAYS GRIEF

As soon as Leonard Stern shut down *7 Days*—no, "clubbed [it like] a baby seal," in *Vanity Fair's*

words—the perky little magazine acquired an extraordinary cachet. Not only did it posthumously win a National Magazine Award, but for a few days there *7 Days*, which had a paid circulation of just 25,000, became like Jim Croce, Len Bias and the Archduke Ferdinand: more important dead than it had ever been while alive.

SCORE .....51.81





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# DON'T LET THE BEDBUGS BITE!

**B**ed-and-breakfasts—in Manhattan? It hardly seems possible. Does the Rodgers and Hart song go, "There's a small hotel by a wishing well...and a Dumpster"? Do the words *Olde Country Inn* make you think of a tatty walk-up on First Avenue? Well, think again—the city is rife with these improbable attempts at

folksy hospitality. Henry Alford reports on the extremely odd hosts, the bagels, the worn towels and the scandalous lack of quaintness.

**T**he visitor to Manhattan who is in search of accom-

modations that might be billed as *inexpensive but lovely* is faced with a dearth of possibilities—hotels are rarely the former, the YMCA never the latter. Thus it was with a sense of epiphany and joy that I opened the Manhattan Yellow Pages and discovered, sandwiched between "Bed Boards" and "Bed Frames—Metal," a section entitled "Bed and Breakfast Accommodations" with some 15 entries.

Those who have traveled Europe or back-roads America and stayed at bed-and-breakfasts—or, as I like to call such places, even when they are in North Carolina or Illinois, *pensiones*—are well acquainted with the pleasures that result when natives with a surfeit of square footage open



I witness my host's curious technique for tidying up.



their homes and their hearts to weary travelers. The paying guest in a stranger's home is also aware of what the typical B&B lacks—pool privileges, room service, tiny guest soaps, a room down the hall with several hundred pounds of free ice. No, the words *bed-and-breakfast* are synonymous with homelike charm, with four-posters and counterpanes and a gift jar of the hostess's own blackberry jam, with clapboard houses on winding lanes and afternoon tea round the fire. *Sunrise Farm, Hill & Hollow, Breezy Acres Farm, The Burton House, The Inn at Fordhook Farm, Ashley Manor*—the names themselves betoken old-fashioned country comfort and delight.

And yet...and yet...Happy as I was to learn that New York City, improbably, had bed-and-breakfasts, I was forced to ask myself if they could provide the kind of spirit-lifting loveliness and the warm human touch for which bed-and-breakfasts are known. *Breezy Acres on West 23rd Street? The Inn at Fordhook on upper Broadway?* I wondered.

My curiosity piqued, I set out to visit some bed-and-breakfasts in New York City with the hope of answering these questions:

1. *Would my hosts eventually untie me and allow me to live?*
2. *Would I really be served breakfast?*

Most travelers find Manhattan B&Bs through reservation services, of which there are at least ten. One calls a service, explains for what night and in what neighborhood one is looking for accommodations and then answers questions about whether one is able to endure cigarette smoke, more than two flights of stairs, pets or shared bathrooms. Of course, suspiciousness has no place in this cozy world. None of the three services I used asked me to meet them or provide references. All they knew, and all my hosts knew, was that I was male and probably in my twenties—the precise profile of the typical violent felon.

I stayed at five different bed-and-breakfasts in Manhattan. I asked to stay at the least-expensive ones in the city and made no demands about smoking, pets, stairs or anything else. The price per night ran between \$60 and \$80, from which the reservation service takes a cut of about 25 percent. (The price for a night at a typical hotel in New York is more than \$100, although the Hotel Rio on West 47th Street charges only \$50 plus tax.) My hosts said they averaged around six guests a month, and so they all had real jobs in addition to welcoming complete strangers into their homes and offering them toast. I learned many things from my experience. I learned that even in the big, anonymous city, people are reaching out to people. And I learned that these people are very strange.

## Upper West Side Story

PUSSY WILLOWS AND SUSPECT SOAP

An elfin woman in her early sixties who wears her hair in bangs bids me enter her dark apartment on the Upper West Side, takes my bag and immediately and awkwardly says, "Let me show you your room." The room is small and dark and is defined on the top by a swirly stucco ceiling and on the bottom by two pieces of carpet that are both beginning to unravel. A Coke bottle filled with dried pussy willows sits on a drab wooden dresser. My host suggests that I get myself settled and then come join her in the kitchen.

As I am unpacking I notice that the transom over the door to my room has been knocked out, and suddenly I am glad that my plans for the evening do not involve having sex. I am moved, however, to check the bed linens, and I discover that they are floral-printed and are actually transparent in parts. *I could probably read The New York Times through these!*, I think, aware that this is an accolade for croissant dough, not for bedsheets.

Moments later I walk down the hall, an area illuminated, as my room is, by naked overhead bulbs, and I pass the bathroom and another guest bedroom before entering the kitchen. The kitchen appears to be a repository for cat postcards and dried flowers and dead plants in La Yogurt containers. Its floor is covered in a hazy coffee-nougat-phlegm-colored linoleum that in one spot is beginning to buckle. I join my host

at the kitchen table, and we talk for about 45 minutes, during which time she emerges as an intelligent and energetic chain-smoker. Shortly into our talk, I bring up the topic of money and say, "Should I pay you now or should I w—," whereupon, pupils practically blazing with holographic dollar signs, she cuts me off with "Why don't we get it over with now?" Her intensity reemerges later in the conversation when, having pinpointed a crumb, she press her finger against the red plastic tablecloth, gingerly places the crumb in her mouth and swallows. I now realize that the relatively unkempt nature of the apartment is less a reflection of lack of effort than it is of this rather time-consuming cleaning process.

When I get up to go out for dinner, my host lays out a few of her ground rules. There will be coffee, tea and bagels on the table in the morning, and I am to help myself to them. I am free to sit in the kitchen as much as I want. There will be a couple staying in the second bedroom; my host herself will be staying with her visiting brother in the closed-off front part of the apartment.

The next morning I am awakened by the sound of the two other paying guests and my host in the kitchen. Not wanting to have to interact in a precaffeinated state, I loll in bed until it sounds as if they have left the kitchen. A cursory glance around the room reveals that I have been



provided with a respectable bath towel, an old but not yet fraying flesh-colored hand towel and a sad black-and-yellow-plaid washcloth possibly dating from the Eisenhower administration. I pad down to the bathroom, witness its grout deterioration, am vaguely repulsed by the sight of human hair and used Q-Tips in the unemptied trash can and decide to brave a shower. The bar of soap in the shower looks newish but not brand-spanking-new; I put it between my clenched hands and lather off a good quarter inch of its potentially pubic-hair-afflicted surface before applying it to my person.

Later, once dressed, I walk out of my room, whereupon my host, outfitted in a nubby, bright-red bunny-type sleeping garment, materializes in the hallway and appears eager to make me coffee. I tell her I am going out to buy the paper; she oddly responds, "Oh, are you leaving now?" I tell her no, I am simply going to buy the paper

and then I will be right back. This reiteration of my agenda seems to sink in, and she asks whether it would be okay for her to strip the bed while I am gone. I give this proposal my ready assent.

When I return, the apartment is eerily quiet. The other guests have left, and I cannot find my host. With a sense of slightly anxious peacefulness, I sit in the kitchen, which is lit by a single fluorescent bulb over the sink, and drink some coffee and eat a bagel and read the paper. I've had the bed and now—breakfast! The fluorescent light gives the coffee-nougat-phlegm linoleum an interesting glow, I notice.

In time, I pack and seek out my host. I knock on the door of her part of the apartment; her brother greets me and tells me she is out doing laundry, so I thank him and leave. The polite hemisphere of my brain wonders momentarily if I am meant to tip my host, but then the impolite hemisphere sniggers at the very idea.

point, while I am purposefully headed to the bathroom, my host introduces me to the other guest—a businessman from Michigan who, because he has a lot of work in Manhattan, has reserved a room with the host for Tuesday through Thursday for the entire month. The enthusiasm that my host evinces for this man ("A regular! *All the way from Michigan!*") makes me feel like a younger, less-loved sibling.

When I return from dinner that night, I hear the news from the TV in my host's bedroom, yet she emerges from the kitchen. She tells me she likes to listen to the news while she exercises—an activity that I can only imagine involves a lot of crouching and lotion. She walks into her bedroom, and I am bold enough to glance at the artwork in the outer area of the living room, still tantalizing, still unapproachable.

Later that night I decide to go outside for a walk. I grab the spare house key and leave my room. Nothing could have prepared me for what I then witness; for there, traipsing across the living room on her way to the kitchen, is my host, her calves and fleshy lower thighs unprotected by the scant yardage of her T-shirt-style nightie. Does this help explain why the living room is forbidden? In an effort to mask my nervous laughter, I produce a sound that is somewhere between coughing, strangling and running an outboard motor. I avert my eyes from my host's and scurry out the door.

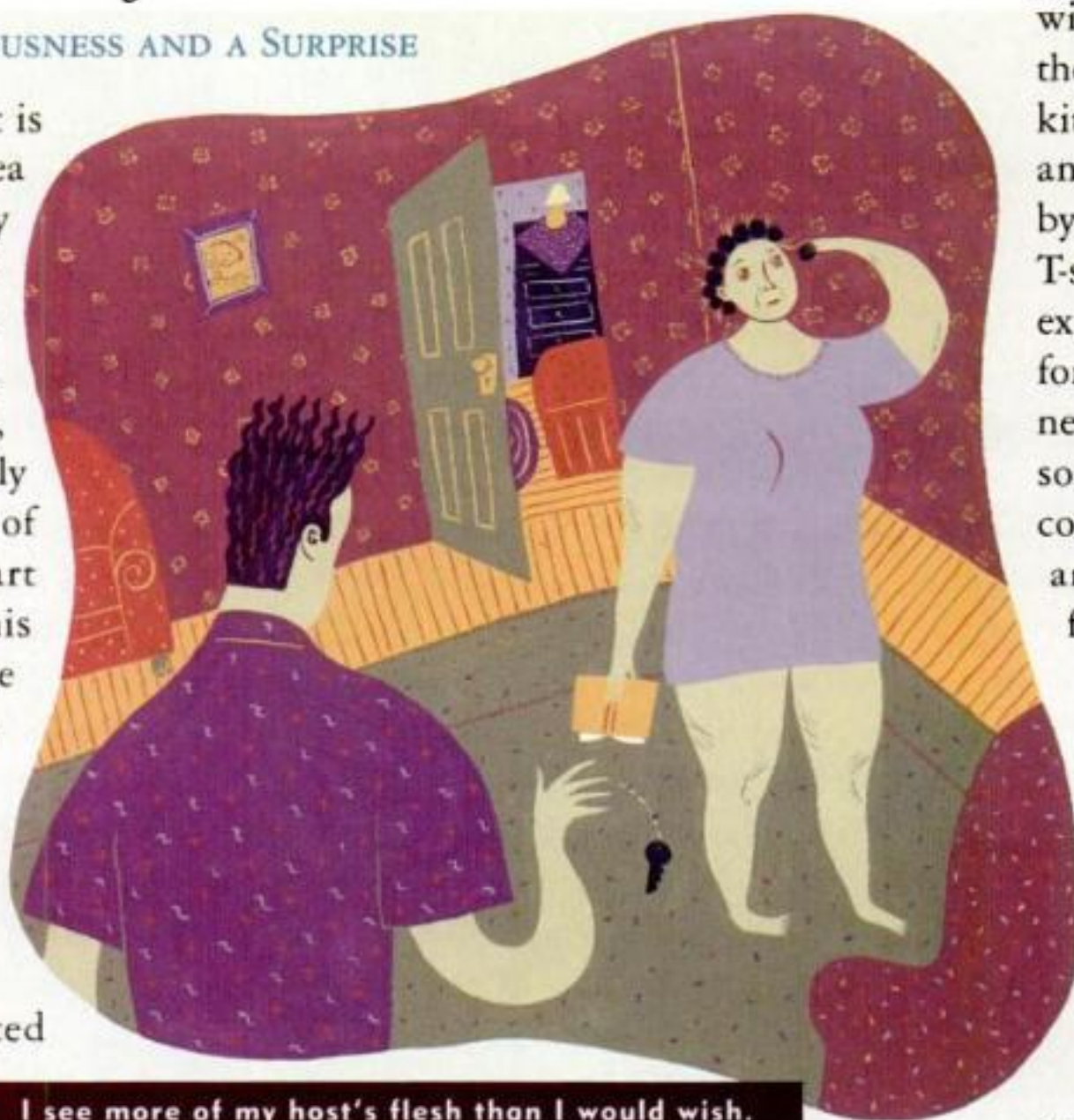
The next morning, while I am sitting at the dining-room table and enjoying my rather lavish, serve-yourself breakfast (bagels, English and blueberry muffins, coffee or tea), my host walks out of her bedroom dressed in a skirt and blouse and tells me she has to be at work at nine but that I can stay. I thank her for her hospitality and tell her I will leave the key on the dining-room table. Shortly after her departure

## Village Visit

### SPACIOUSNESS AND A SURPRISE

The second apartment I stay at is in Greenwich Village, an area noted for its bed-and-breakfasty charm. The apartment features a huge living room that separates my room from the kitchen. However, my host, a vivacious, zaftig single woman in her early sixties, makes no mention of whether the living room is part of my purview, and thus this unavoidable area taunts me throughout the rest of my stay like a large, throbbing question mark. Also, I will once again share a bathroom with another guest. I accept this news with stoicism.

Uncertain of my permitted range, I confine myself mostly to my room, a little box lit by an overhead bulb that is shaded by what looks like a crocheted cap with tassels—perhaps an early prototype for the Shriners' fez. The door to the



I see more of my host's flesh than I would wish.

room, in addition to having a one-inch clearance from the floor, has a two-by-three-foot section of shutters in it, thereby ensuring maximum noise carryover. At one



## GUESS WHO'S COMING TO BREAKFAST?

### SPY Opens Its Own Bed-and-Breakfast

Having sent a correspondent undercover, so to speak, to investigate New York bed-and-breakfasts as a visitor, and having caught a number of very curious hosts off-guard, and having played a little joke on one of them, SPY has decided to look at bed-and-breakfasting from the host's point of view. We want another perspective, and in a sense, we want to give something back.

A SPY editor (one who we suspect is living beyond his means) eagerly volunteered his apartment as the site for the SPY B&B. He lives on the East Side in the low Nineties on what he considers a beautiful tree-lined street, and he arranged for representatives from three reservation services to look at his apartment. "I must tell you," said one, "that we have a problem with the location. You and I know that this is a lovely neighborhood [*insincere smirk*], but, you see, for people from out of town it seems too...high. They feel they have one foot in Harlem. Ha ha ha. Excuse me." The spare, stylishly underfurnished look that our editor had labored so hard to achieve met roundly with disapproval. One inspector with a German accent observed candidly, "Vell, zee apartment is...comfortable but—how shall I say? *Minimally* appointed." Another commented, "You should make things more cozy. Hang prints on the walls!"

His apartment listed, the editor now waits for a guest. A team of SPY staff members intends to make the stay of our unwitting visitor a little unusual, and then, since he will have been such a good sport, SPY will offer him valuable parting gifts and a night at a real hotel. At that point, of course, our editor's bed-and-breakfast will close down for good. So far, however, the right call hasn't come, and this is very frustrating, the editor says. He explained to the editorial board that the offers he has received—a whole family who wanted to stay a week, for example—just wouldn't be suitable. In the meantime, he figures it pays to practice—hence the friends, some with small children, that he seems to have staying with him so often. The music box that plays "Home, Sweet Home," the crocheted pillows, the toast caddies, the prints—these purchases will be part of the gag, he says, and we can't help but respect his attention to detail.

When an appropriate guest does appear, the SPY B&B will be ready. ☛

I enter the living room. I lounge victoriously on the couch for 20

minutes before heading to my office.

## Midtown Nocturne

"THE MOONLIGHT AFFECTS ME...STRANGELY"

"Come on in. But why don't you take your shoes off," says my third host, a beatific, lovely woman in her late forties wearing a loose tie-dyed jumpsuit. "We don't wear shoes here. This is a sanctuary." I oblige her, walk into her immaculate midtown apartment and behold three women lounging on the floor of the living room. It is a large, minimalist room, its whiteness punctuated only by three Turner-esque paintings, two wire sculptures, a grand piano, two small chairs and an ottoman.

I pick up my bag and ask her if I might put it in my room. She looks at me quizzically, pauses and then, pointing to the right, says, "You'll either be in here—which is my bedroom—or in the living room on a futon. Or out on the terrace if you would like." In deference to my own personal safety, I choose the living room.

My host introduces me to her three friends and then says, "Just make yourself comfortable. They won't be here *all* night." I find this statement unsettling, given that the women are currently sprawled on the floor of what is to be my sleeping quarters.

I am invited to join them, so I hover briefly on the periphery of their group. They are eating chips and salsa and reading to one another from a book called *Being a Woman: Fulfilling Your Femininity and Finding Love*, and then relating the passages to their own lives. Not being a woman, I find my attention lapses, and I wander out onto the terrace.

Several moments later my host comes out and asks whether I would like to sit out there in a chair; I say yes, and she brings me a very comfortable folding deck chair. Then she goes back into the apartment and returns with a folded-up piece of fabric that she hands to me, saying, "Here



My host offers me a loose-fitting garment.

is a sarong. You can just slip into it. We aren't bashful here." However, I *am*, so once she has turned and gone back into the apartment, I reach over the doorsill and lay the sarong on the living-room floor. I sit and try to relax. I look at the sarong. I think, *What?*

When I go back inside an hour or so later, I discover that my host has moved my bag onto a massage table in her bedroom. I put my sneakers on and walk into the living room to tell her that I am going out for dinner, and then she stares at my sneakers and chastises me for the "negative energy" they might unleash in her apartment.

Once outside, resentful that aspersions have been cast on my footwear, I avenge myself by going to a restaurant and eating a lot of meat. When I return to the apartment, I slip off my shoes and enter to find that the three women have left but a new one has arrived. She and the host and I go out on the terrace and marvel at the nearly full moon. My host sets up a futon on



the floor of the living room for me and explains that her bed is also portable. Then she says, "I may bring it out here and come join you. I tend to wander about in the night." I smile bleakly.

A few minutes later I follow her into her bedroom to get a pillow, and she takes the opportunity to say to me, "Don't be bashful around me."

"Don't be bashful about *what*?" I ask.

"Don't be bashful around me, because I'm not bashful around you."

About an hour later her guest leaves, and 20 minutes after that I get into bed, sure that I will awaken in the middle of the night and find myself being either raped or shaved.

The following morning, however, I arise intact and unscathed. I am thankful when I notice that my bag has been moved from the bedroom massage table into the hall. After dressing hurriedly and self-consciously in the bathroom, I am treated to a wonderful breakfast of plain and chocolate croissants, slices of melon and freshly brewed coffee. During this repast my host and I get to talking about owning things, and she says, "I don't believe in ownership. I think that I have a part of all things and all things are a part of me." I ask my host what she would do if a friend of hers were wearing a shirt that my host knew would flatter her more than it would her friend. My host replies that she would either ask the friend where she got the shirt or say, "You have had that shirt long enough, and maybe I should have it for a while."

I instinctively clutch my bag, and a short while thereafter, my bag and I leave.

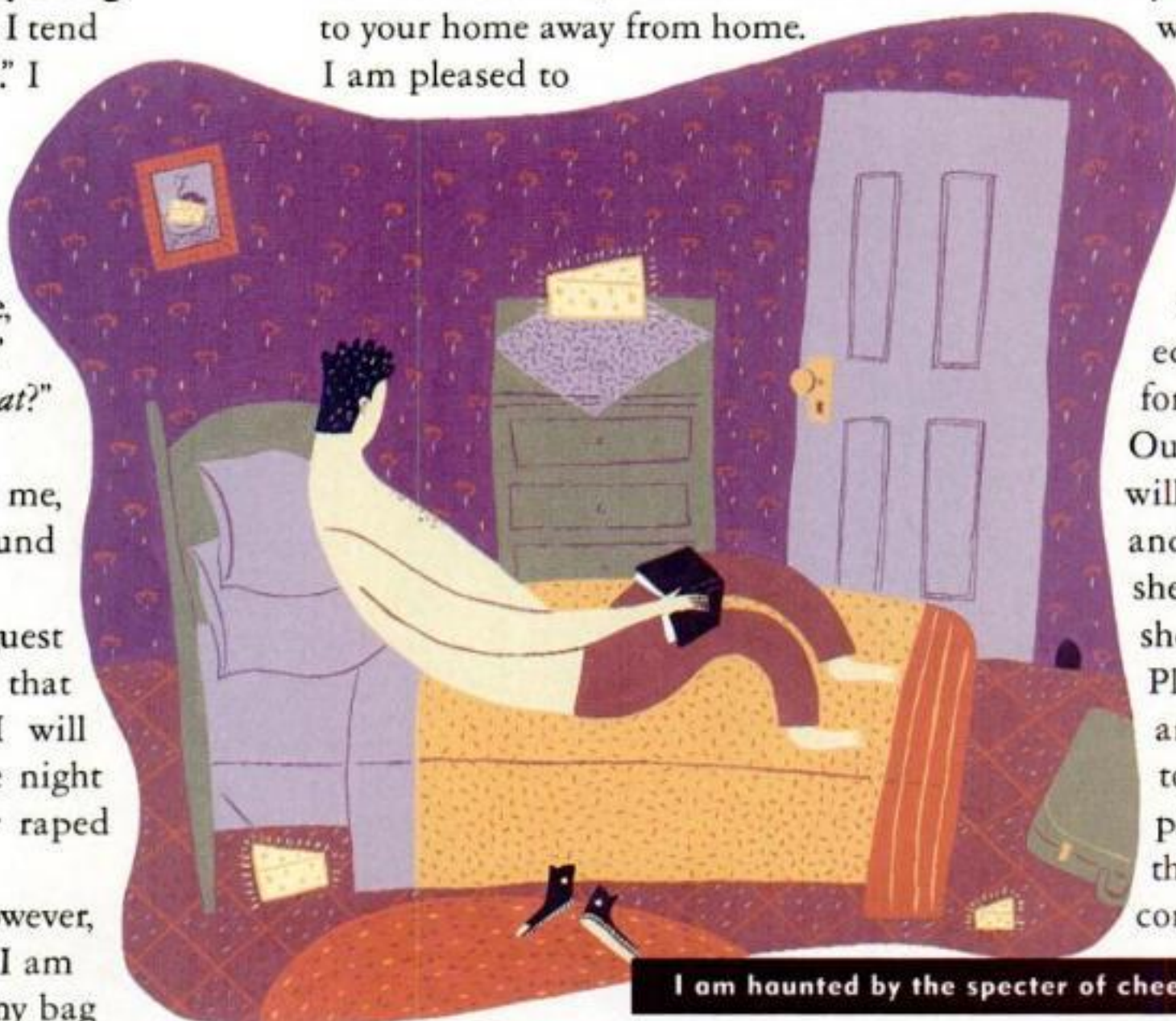
## East Side Elegance

HELPFUL HINTS AND THOUGHTS  
ABOUT CHEESE

My next stay, in the East Nineties, distinguishes itself on two counts: (a) the host is a man, and (b) he

offers a snack service.

On the bedside table in my room I find a note. "Hi," it reads. "Welcome to your home away from home. I am pleased to



out during the day, a house key is available so you can let yourself in and out as you please. You are welcome to join us in the family room for television any evening after 8:00 p.m. A small radio is available for use in your room if you wish. Laundry equipment is available for your use at [Wite-Out blotch] charge. You will find extra blankets and towels on the upper shelf of your closet, should you need them. Please let me know anything I can do to make yours a very pleasant stay." I think the note is admirably comprehensive.

I don't partake of the snack

have you as a guest and would like you to enjoy your stay. How can I help you? Do you need information about sightseeing? transportation? entertainment? Just ask. If I don't know, I'll be glad to find out for you. Do you need an ironing board? A hair dryer? Would you care for a snack before you retire? All are available upon request. (The evening snack service is \$3.50 additional to your room rate.) Breakfast will be served between 7:00 a.m. and 8:00 a.m. If that time is not convenient for your schedule, and you prefer to serve yourself at a later time, please make arrangements with me before you retire. If you need to be in and

service, but over breakfast the next morning (coffee, four pieces of bakery-fresh white bread, a pot of marmalade, a pot of margarine) I chat with my host about it. It is favored largely by his younger clientele. "They don't eat enough dinner; they need more. [I give them] cold cuts. An egg, a soft-boiled egg. Cheese—I keep a lot of cheese around. Or a sandwich." When he mentions the cheese, the way he says *around* faintly suggests that he uses the word literally. The rest of my stay is marked by an unshakable expectation that I will encounter cheese in some inappropriate setting.

## Partial Park View Pleasures

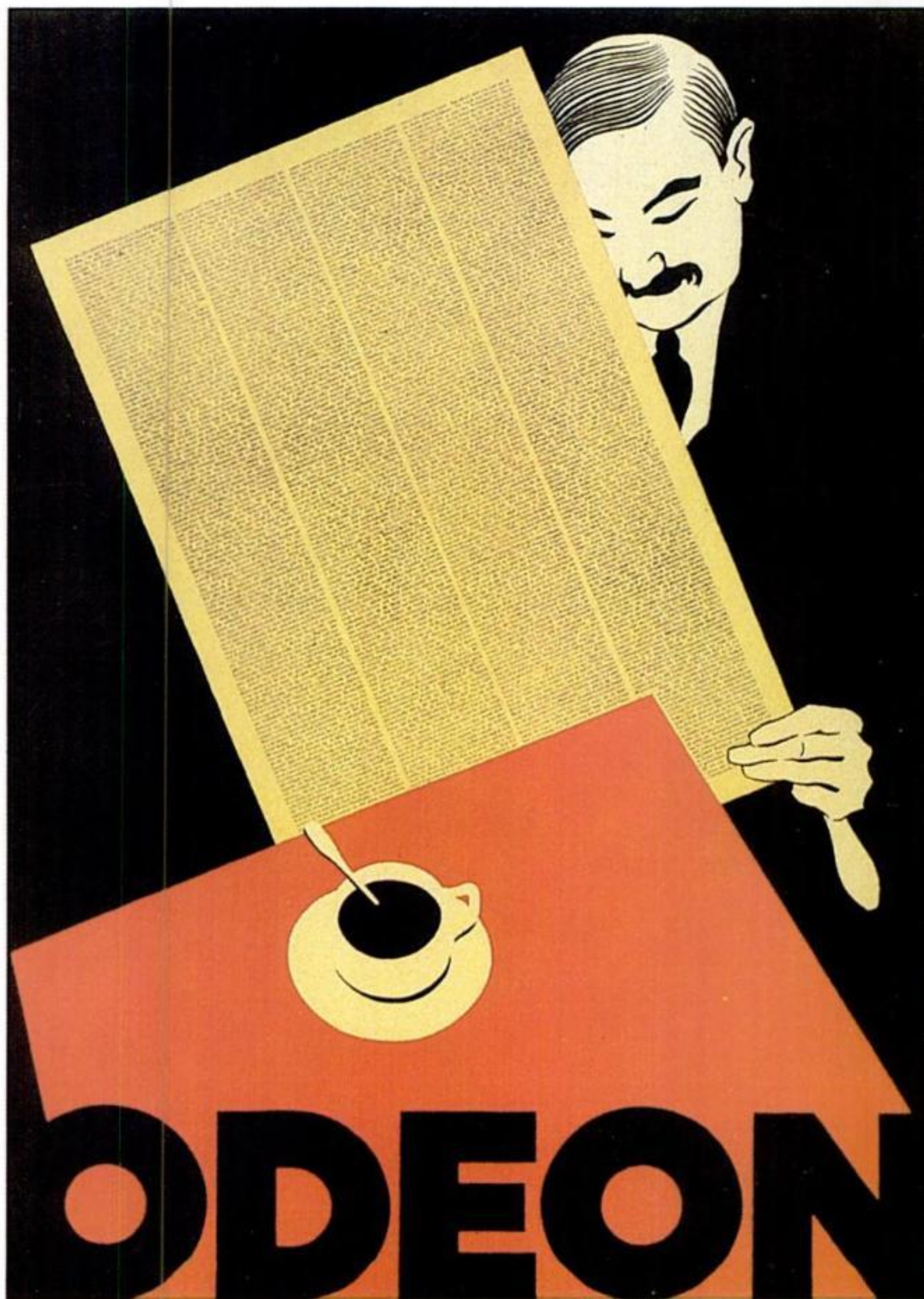
MIDWAY, MORE SOAP AND A PRANK

When it comes time to stay at my last Manhattan bed-and-breakfast, I recall the words of Bernice Chesler, as I often do in my private moments. Miss Chesler is the travel philosopher, author of *Bed and Breakfast in the Mid-Atlantic States*, among other works. With regard to the bed-and-breakfast, she has written that "the keynote is hospitality" and that it is "a people-

to-people program." I realize that by remaining in my room too much at night and tending to avoid the living areas, I have failed to test these principles. I am now determined to become more of a people person.

My final host lives on the West Side near Central Park. She is a small, peppy woman in her early sixties, and she shows me directly





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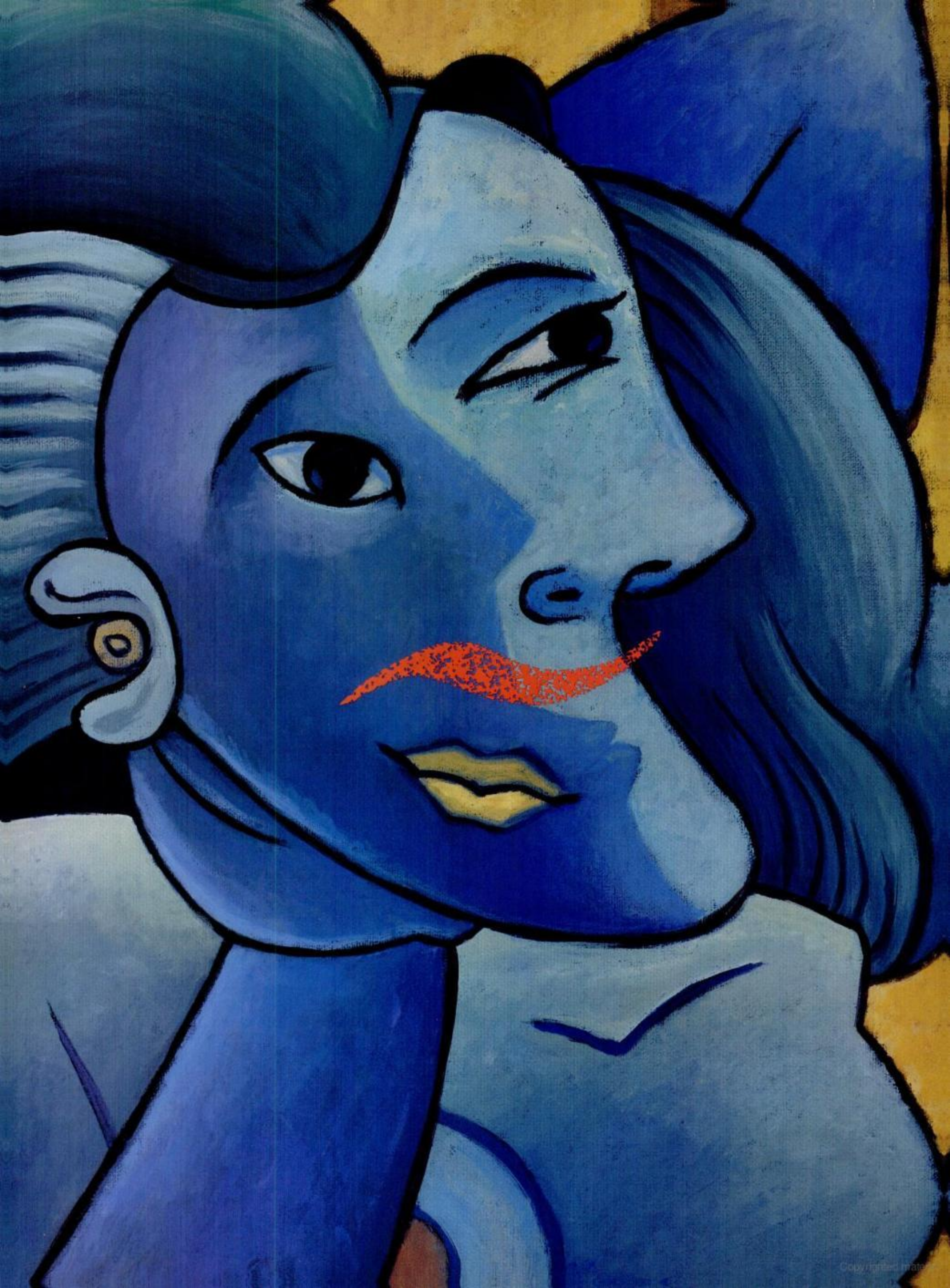
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to my room without mentioning her large living room. I am now a man with a mission. I return from dinner to find that my host has gone out shopping (as she had told me she would) and that all the lights in the living room and adjoining dining area are off. I turn on a lamp in the living room and pull a chair up to the television. I turn on the TV and discover that the war classic *Midway* is being shown. I turn up the volume so that the soundtrack adequately mimics a sea battle.

When my host returns about 20 minutes later, she looks in on me with an initial air of distraction and confusion. But seconds later she is sporting an apparently genuine smile and asks me what I am watching. When I reply that it is *Midway*, she does not seem enthusiastic and goes into the kitchen to unpack her groceries.

Several minutes later she comes back into the living room. "I finally got some *soap*!" she says triumphantly, apparently unconscious of the relative ease with which most of us find and buy this product. She has bought a four-pack of Ivory and, while extolling its virtues, encourages me to smell a bar. I do, but then quickly return to *Midway*. As the pace of the combat starts to quicken, I decide to cheer on the battle scenes. "Bah-bing!" I say when a bomb is dropped on an American ship; when a Japanese plane erupts in flames, I cheer, "Bingo!" My host looks at me slightly askance, chuckles nervously and remarks that the *depiction* of war is so much less frightening than actual war. She then goes and sits on the couch behind me and noisily reads *The New York Times*.

At ten o'clock I stand and switch the channel to PBS, which is airing *Metamorphosis: Man Into*

*Woman*, a documentary about a man who has a sex change. My host and I watch this with rapt curiosity. When she is forced to answer the phone twice during the show, she is vexed and hurries the callers off the line.

I decide to go further. I want to see how the people-to-people program really works. Over breakfast the next morning I lie elaborately, telling my host that I am a decorator and that I have recently graduated from a community college in Massachusetts with a degree in interior design. She seems truly interested and asks me several questions about my schooling. Shortly thereafter I pack my bag and thank my host for her hospitality. Then, bag in hand, I tell her that I have *rethought* the arrangement of some of the furniture in the room that I slept in. She titters nervously and expectantly and asks to see. I open the door to the bedroom and allow her eyes to take in the changes that I wrought before going to bed the night before. I have moved the queen-size bed four inches to the left, moved the dark pine Swedish modern desk 15 feet or so across the room to where the bedside table was (and put the bedside table where the desk was) and exchanged the positions of the two framed posters.

She takes one look and says, "Oh, it's nice. It looks...it really looks nice."

"Oh, you don't mind it?" I say with feigned modesty. "I completely understand



**I impose my taste for old war movies on the household.**

if you hate it. It's just that it's so hard for me to spend time in a space and not *interact* with it, even on the most minimal level. I didn't move *all* the pieces."

Noticing the open area created by the exchange of the largish desk for the smaller bedside table, she says, "Oooh—it certainly makes it easier to get in here to the bathroom."

"Yes," I say, picking up her lead. "I think it really opens up the space. I was trying to create...*egress*."

"Ahh," she says, apparently trying to digest this particular design element. She doesn't seem to notice the switched posters, so I say nothing.

I walk out to the hallway, eager to leave. She accompanies me and, on our way to the door, titters, "It's *nifty* what you did in there. Oh, yes, that's something."

Two days later, under the pretext of having lost a contact lens during my stay, I return to the apartment and discover that the furniture remains the way I arranged it. My host mentions that she spent the night in the guest room.

"You slept in *this* room?" I ask incredulously.

"Well, I was just concerned that with the desk so close to the bed now, it might be a little cramped, but it's not. It's good if you want to do some writing or use the desk. I really like it! I like spaciousness, and this way is much more spacious."

I feel complete. I feel *loved*. But then, suddenly: "I've got some spare furniture in *my* bedroom, too—but *I'm not going to show it to you*."

My sojourns at the homes of total strangers are behind me now. And although I cannot say that I have forged any new friendships, or that I plan to invite any of my hosts to my own home, I have come to learn more about New York, more about my needs as a guest and, yes, perhaps a little more about myself. In the past, my behavior in cities had always been guided by three simple maxims: Don't talk to strangers. Look both ways before crossing. And don't sleep in the subway, darling. Now, having paid to stay at several of Manhattan's homiest accommodations, I know that it is important not to be bashful around strangers, because they are not bashful around me. ☺



Almost everything about the



PHOTOGRAPH BY HARRY BENSON

Poised for action, activist Majeed stands in his office at Kaufman Astoria Studios in Queens in front of a photograph of Paul Robeson as the Emperor Jones.

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**movies is false:** actors who loathe each other fall deeply in love, Toronto passes for New York, people pretend to grieve when *Breathless* Mahoney dies, and producers say, *How's it going, babe?* as if they cared deeply. But for one power broker in the industry, image and action are one. This man is forthright, guileless. He is Mustafa Majeed, a fast-talking activist-cum-thug who frightens movie directors and producers for a living—including, he says, Woody Allen, Francis Ford Coppola and Richard Attenborough—and draws his salary from a government program. So let's go meet the man who's

# Mau-Mauiing *the* Moviemakers

We have heard many legends about New York City over the years — plausible, compelling stories that we cannot quite bring ourselves to believe: that bulbous albino alligators roam our sewer system, that several men each year electrocute themselves by urinating from a subway platform onto the third rail, that Andrew Stein is really very shrewd. There was another legend that we had frequently heard from friends in the film business — the one about how movie and television locations on the streets of the city are commonly invaded by a charismatic black agitator who, protesting the absence of members of minority groups in the crew, menacingly disrupts the shoot until some jobs are created for his followers. Friends would say they'd heard of his breaking up *Desperately Seek-*

*ing Susan*, *The Equalizer*, *The Cosby Show*, *A Chorus Line* — my God, even Woody Allen movies! Sometimes the story had him arriving on location with a couple of scary henchmen, other times with a small army of street people who would get rowdy and shut down the set for a while. Almost always his visit would end after a discreet meeting in a closed office with the producer or production manager, from which the agitator would emerge smiling. Soon afterward — the next day or so — a couple of new gofers, typically described as inexperienced and uninterested in learning the business, would appear on the set and, at union-scale wages, mangle for the duration of the shoot.

All in all, a likely tale, but just a little too remarkable to swallow. Then, one afternoon, a cinematographer we know called to say that a tall, imposing black man had bullied his way onto the set of a film he was shooting. The stranger was passing out business cards and intimidating production assistants and, most interesting, claiming to work for the Mayor's Office of Film, Theatre and Broadcasting. *Could it be?* A legendary extortionist and scammer, being paid with scarce municipal funds? *Nah...*

MUSTAFA MAJEED, FOUNDER AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE Communications Industry Skills Center, is sitting in his three-room suite of

by Steve Radlauer



offices on the second floor of the main building of Kaufman Astoria Studios in Queens. The offices are well furnished, and Majeed is mild-mannered, loquacious, genial, handsome, impeccably dressed and...*big* (six foot two, 225 pounds). He is discussing his mission of trying to racially integrate film crews in New York. He claims to have successfully nudged blacks aboard crews in many productions filmed here over the last five years, most recently *Godfather III* and *Bonfire of the Vanities*.

At the moment, he's answering a question about whether he has ever had to use physical force when visiting a set to discuss the matter of minority employment. He has chosen to reply with an anecdote about one of Woody Allen's production managers. "When he saw me, I had a white shirt and tie on, so maybe he thought I was one of those conservative blacks," Majeed says in a purring, Barry White-like baritone. "Before the elevator door closed, I jumped on [and] said, 'Do you know what the fuck you're doing?'" Majeed pauses. "[Then] I grabbed him by the collar so I was *choking* him." Before long, the producer found room on his payroll for three new gofers.

The admission is startling, all the more so for the nonchalance with which it is delivered. Mustafa Majeed neither hides nor sensationalizes his use of muscle; like a linebacker coolly describing a vicious clothesline tackle, he discusses these tactics with an offhand professionalism. And why not? It's not as though he works in a milieu where much attention is paid to fairness and social justice (let alone good manners) or where aggressive directness hasn't always had its advocates. After all, for many American families the trek out of poverty and into the middle class has featured broken limbs and busted heads—theirs, an ancestor's, an adversary's. Plenty of labor unions came into being as justifiable protection rackets. Why be so shocked about it now? Moreover, while progress toward integration of the film industry has been poor in general, it has been practically nonexistent in the technical unions that govern who gets to work on the movie sets in New York. An investigation conducted by the city in 1985 found that minorities and women

were significantly underrepresented in an industry that does \$3 billion worth of business annually in New York, and that one of the principal villains was Local 52 of the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees (IATSE), the group that has a stranglehold on the hiring of such behind-the-scenes movie hands as electricians, grips, sound engineers, carpenters, prop handlers and set builders. It is difficult to find statistics that say precisely how many minority-group members belong to Local 52. The only hard numbers apparently available appeared in a Local 52 membership bulletin from 1968, which reported "24 Negroes [*sic*] and 7 Spanish-speaking Americans" among 550 active members, but a telling gauge of the state of things was the immeasurably brief span of time that elapsed between the moment Local 52's current president, John Oates, heard the word *minorities* in a question we put to him, and his gruff response. ("No comment." *Click. Bzzzz.*)

The 1,250 members of Local 52 who work on TV and movie sets today make an average of \$280 a day, not including overtime. The union maintains control of its lucrative piece of the pie in two ways. First, and more obviously, the union remains powerful by making it almost impossible for newcomers to join, thus ensuring that the pool of skilled workers remains limited. Second, and more deviously, the union makes it extremely difficult for those few blacks who have forced their way into the business to get work. On most sets crafts people are hired by their department heads, who in almost all cases are well-connected white males with seniority who have a highly developed sense of favoritism. If the union doesn't want you working, your department head will be among the first to know. Social progress has never been a priority.

None of this should come as a great surprise to anyone familiar with the underside of the labor movement. It certainly was no surprise to Mustafa Majeed, who got his introduction to the kind of union intransigence he would find at IATSE during a round of experiences with



Look out, Mr. Bill! Two hundred twenty-five pounds of nattily dressed activist demonstrates his set-storming technique backstage at *The Cosby Show*.

the equally racist construction unions. He started working in the building trades in the early 1970s, after serving in the military. Finding his opportunities blocked, he got involved with civil-rights coalitions such as Fight Back, organizing protests that aimed to get more construction jobs for blacks and Hispanics. Among the skills he acquired were how to organize a demonstration, how to recruit dozens—even hundreds—of unemployed people willing to demonstrate for almost any cause and how to build alliances with other minority leaders who themselves maintain lists of protesters.

One day in 1984, while he was "shaping" construction sites in Harlem, he heard that the Andrew McCarthy-Kevin Dillon movie *Heaven Help Us* was being shot down the street. He discovered that although the movie was filming in an overwhelmingly black neighborhood, not one of the more than 100 people working on the shoot was black. Majeed investigated further. He saw that a movie set is a lot like a construction site: there are all sorts of electricians, carpenters and construction workers



on hand, and there is seldom a racially integrated crew. "I realized," he says, "the kind of money [the crew] was making—I mean incredible money, astronomical amounts of money. Big bucks. And then I looked at the lunch. Lunch was catered by the production company. And they had the finest steak, fish, everything that you wanted. So this is when I brought the men over." By *the men*, Majeed means a score of tough, surly, unruly-looking unemployed fellows, whose presence was meant to put the cast and crew off their feed. The film's production manager quickly conferred with Majeed, and rather than lose tens or hundreds of thousands of dollars' worth of shooting time to dyspepsia or worse, he agreed to hire a few members of the group as production assistants, schleppers, whatever, for the duration of the shoot.

Mustafa Majeed had found his calling.

Majeed established an organization, the Motion Picture Project (which evolved into the Commu-

production. The goal of these maneuvers, Majeed says, is to attain 60 percent minority employment. Yes—*six-oh*, since, as he says, 60 percent of New Yorkers are black, Hispanic or Asian (the figure, actually, is 53.6 percent).

Are there gaps in Majeed's logic? Maybe. A film crew, obviously, is put together *before* photography begins, not in the middle of the shoot. Why not work to broaden opportunities in a less confrontational, more systematic way? If his goal is really to get more minority people working in the industry generally, why devote so much effort to forcing individual productions to take on a few gofers? (As Jayne Keyes, the director of the Mayor's Film Office in New York City, puts it, "You don't use a Band-Aid to cure cancer.... These little bits and snips are not going to solve the problem.") How many of the few people whom Majeed has got hired—people who, entirely apart from their race, weren't wanted or needed in the first place—have worked again in movies? Doesn't Majeed understand that if you're trying to start a career in production, you want to get on producers'

Rolodexes, not on their enemies lists? And doesn't he know that the film industry is rife with feudal employment practices (nepotism, lengthy apprenticeships that call for long hours of hard work performed in cruel proximity to a phalanx of Teamsters paid good money to sleep in their trucks, and so on)? Why waste time hammering away at producers when it's arguably the *unions* who limit the number of minority people on the set?

As it happens, Majeed understands

**"I said, 'Do you know what you're doing?' Then I grabbed him by the collar so I**

**was choking him"**

nications Industry Skills Center [CISC] in 1987), marshaled his troops and began organizing regular visits to the movie and TV sets around town. Within a few months the Motion Picture Project had found employment opportunities for its charges on *Key Exchange*, *A Chorus Line*, *Desperately Seeking Susan*, *Hannah and Her Sisters* and several TV shows. Majeed's campaign has remained in high gear ever since. His typical strategy is simple and direct: charge onto a set, unplug the lights, fling the gels, stand in front of the camera and give everyone apoplexy until the producers agree to hire a specified person or two for the remainder of the

perfectly the power of unions and the importance of talking to producers during preproduction. But understanding the way one ought to accomplish things within the system didn't help him get people jobs. "They had this Catch-22," he says, "wherein if I went to a production company, they'd say, *Listen, if he was in the union, we'd be able to put him on.* Then when I went to the other place—the union—they'd say, *If he had a job, we'd be able to put him into the union.*" Pat Scott, a former director of the Mayor's Film Office, confirms Majeed's account of the standard movie-business runaround. "The unions will say, *We don't do the hiring, we're a union.* Anybody in a production-management line will say, *I report to the producer.* The producers will say, *Look, we're committed to certain signatory unions, and if {Majeed's guys} aren't in the union, we couldn't hire them if they were the best in the world.* It goes around and around the loop that way, which is why progress is so slow."

Majeed has chosen to attack the loop with a blunt instrument. "We swarm all over the set," he says. Whom does Majeed mean by *we*? Himself,





his lieutenants (most notably a 250-pound Rasta called Bonecrusher) and some friends from the neighborhood. "I bring the Rastafarians, I bring the Muslims, I bring the Puerto Ricans with the little scarves wrapped around their heads. They come from the South Bronx—damn fellas look like they just got out of jail, know what I'm saying? I want to make my point."

Majeed doesn't always need an army to make his point, as his account of his effort to integrate the set of the recently re-born *Kojak* series indicates. According to Majeed, he and an accomplice arrived unannounced at the location—an office building in lower Manhattan—and set out in search of the production manager. Finding an office on the set, Majeed looked in and saw only a bunch of crew members lounging around. He demanded to see the production manager and was told by a young "security fella" that he had come upon a closed set and would have to leave, and besides, everyone was at lunch. "I didn't come here for my health," Majeed said, stomping onto the set. The young worker, loyally doing his job, tried to keep him off the set. "He jumped in front of the door," says Majeed, "and I just kinda, with one hand, just pushed him. And he fell back. And I didn't have no more problem with him." Within minutes, uniformed security guards arrived to escort Majeed away. He left peaceably, but not before firing a parting salvo at the young worker who had tried to block his way: "I told him right in front of the police—I said, 'The next time you dream of getting in front of me I'm gonna put you on the goddamn critical list.' He looked

at me, shaking, and he didn't say a damn thing."

In the interests of accuracy, it's worth noting that the "security fella" Majeed encountered on the *Kojak* set was not a security guard but a production assistant. Indeed, at five foot ten and 150 pounds, with shoulder-length hair and a penchant for purple clothing, the young man could hardly look less like anyone's idea of a security fella, his crackling walkie-talkie notwithstanding. Otherwise, his account of the incident agrees substantially with Majeed's, except that he says Majeed's parting words were "Next time you better not fuck with me or I'll squash you, you fuckin' PA."

"After he split," the assistant says, "the word got around that he had threatened to come back with 20 or 30 men. One of the crew members said he'd once seen Majeed come to a set making demands, get turned away, leave, go get a bunch of screwballs from a local homeless shelter, get them all riled up and bring them back to the set." This time, however, Majeed did not return. He claims there was no need—several black people were hired the very next day. The PA who was shoved by Majeed disputes this, saying that somewhere between seven and ten black people were already on the crew, as Majeed would have seen had he arrived anytime but lunchtime, when the set was deserted.

Proud of the effects of his bullying, Majeed is nonetheless careful not to confess to too much. "I don't get into any type of physical fight," he contends. "I send a letter out to all the production managers and let them know that I'd like to speak with them, asking if I could have a meeting with them on a diplomatic level." "Bullshit!" says a veteran New York producer whose team usually includes a relatively high proportion of women and minority technicians. "[I found him] standing in the middle of the [set]—he's got his sidekick with him, and he's trying to look tough. To get on the set he'd manhandled a black woman PA, pushed her and said, 'Get out of the way, this is man's work.'" The producer says Majeed also misrepresented where he's from. "He said something like 'I represent the Mayor's Office,' throwing out the mayor's name real quick. I said, 'Will you please leave the set? We're trying to shoot a movie here.' And he said, 'You better listen to me or I'll have 300 people down here picketing you and close you down. And I'll have newspaper reporters with me.' That was his introduction. He then said he was going to close us down because he wanted our crew to be 10 percent minority. But we were already over 10 percent." The producer says no new workers were hired.

The question of Majeed's relationship to city government is an intriguing one. Given his penchant for muscling rather prominent and well-connected people, the link is surprisingly strong. Indeed, it seems a little unbelievable, but the main funding for CISC—\$150,000 a year—comes from New York City's Department of Employment. From that, Majeed says, he derives the very modest salary that constitutes most of his income. (Majeed says he also earns "finder's fees" from his previous vocation, helping blacks get work in construction.) The city, as should be expected, seems unaware of the nuances of Majeed's tactics. Lynn Saberski,



## Majeed ambushed Sidney Lumet on the set of *Q&A*. "He didn't seem very knowledgeable about the business," Lumet says



general counsel of the Department of Employment, explained to us that CISC's contract is for training people in the technical skills of filmmaking, and that it was awarded in acknowledgment of the discrimination that is practiced in that field. When asked about the instance of choking, Saberski said, "Oh, my. We do not endorse it, and I am not sure if we want to continue the contract at all if that is happening....Part of the reason for setting up the contract was to defuse the violence."

There are connections other than financial between the impoverished city government and this organization so well versed in freelance goonery. Majeed is not connected with the Mayor's Office of Film, Theatre and Broadcasting, as some accuse him of suggesting; indeed, Jayne Keyes calls him counterproductive, an impediment to her efforts to lure more film productions to the city. "He's not only not getting jobs for minorities, but he's also losing jobs for everybody else," she says. "I've gotten several calls saying, 'Jayne, it's hard enough to work in New York. We don't need that—we can go shoot someplace else.'" Nevertheless, her office provides producers who come there for their shooting permits with a copy of *The Directory: A Listing of New York Minority Motion Picture Production and Technical Union Professionals*, a 49-page register of the black, Hispanic and Asian union members. *The Directory* was developed by Majeed and Cliff Frazier, one of his longtime associates.

*The Directory*, of course, gives Majeed a slender moral pretext for his more forceful efforts by offering producers a way to avoid a confrontation: *Hire these workers and we won't bother you*. In fact, *The Directory* is generally ignored by the system, in part because producers are unwilling to disrupt standard operating procedures in the cause of affirmative action. Typically,

a crew is not hired by the producer; instead, the producer or the production manager hires department heads who then hire the actual crew members who will be working under them. Not surprisingly, *The Directory* has had little effect on long-established hiring practices that take place in highly personal ways two or three levels down. Moreover, the book is tainted by Majeed's Sharptonesque tactics. "Personally, when someone forces something down my throat, my first impulse is to resist," says a producer who is supportive of Majeed's goals. "I wouldn't give him the time of day." Nor do all technical workers who are members of minority groups see *The Directory* as much of a help. "You want to be hired because you know that people want your skills, not because you're a minority and they have to hire you," says one frequently employed Hispanic key grip who bootstrapped himself into a career by working for free until he amassed credentials. Would he accept a job if it came through *The Directory*? "I just don't want to be associated with a group like that," he says.

But maybe Majeed really is interested in developing more permanent remedies to racist hiring practices than his temporarily effective strong-arm practices permit. His CISC has indeed established the training program for which his city contract has been issued; that is, it does prepare members of minority groups for technical careers in film.

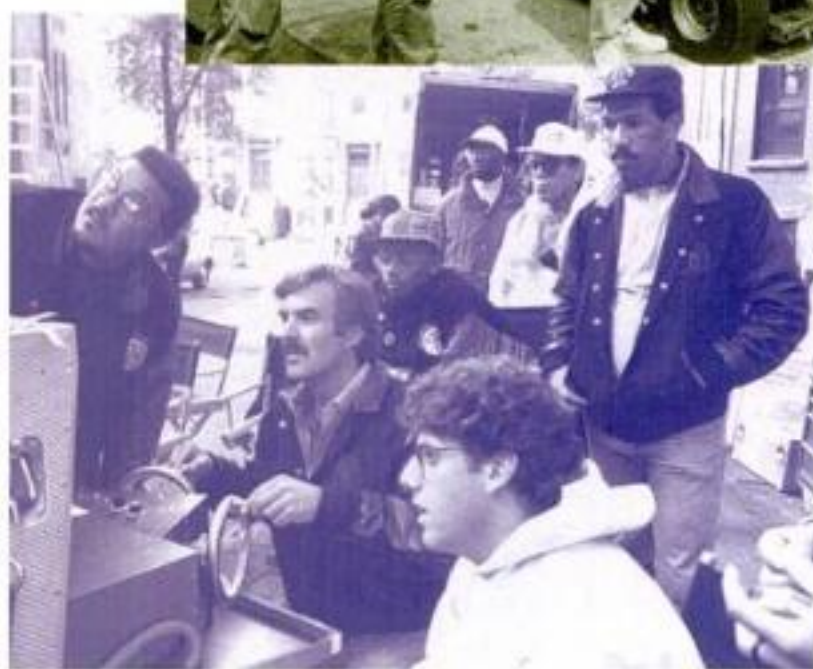
The program, still in its start-up phase, is administered by Bronx Community College, which earlier this year received \$227,000 from New York State. Majeed's group will help recruit the instructors and—hmmm—provide job-placement services. Majeed himself will run a seminar in what might be termed employment psychology, including such subjects as motivation, attitude and—hmmm—how to deal with producers.

"I'm not attacking anymore," he says. "The city and state asked me to work with them. I'm going to do it their way and see if it works. If it doesn't, I'm going to back out and raise hell."

Something about Majeed suggests that the

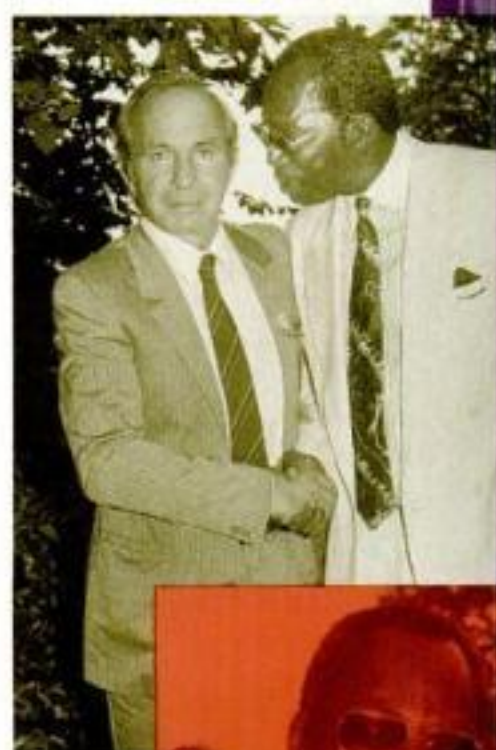
righteous thug in him will not easily give way to the pedagogue, that he is irredeemably an agitator. Furthermore, his knack for confrontation seems better suited to the street than to other environments. A videotape that Majeed proudly

screens shows him in debate with director Sidney Lumet, whom Majeed ambushed on the set of *Q & A* last year. Lumet, plainly itching to get back to work, agrees that there is racism in the industry and places the blame squarely on IATSE. Lumet then offers to help organize a group of influential actors and directors to lean on Local 52 at contract-negotiation time and insist on more minority members. Lumet suggests that Majeed give him a call after he finishes shooting *Q & A* to set up a meeting in which they can talk strategy and draw up a list of studio executives, actors and directors who would support the effort. Tellingly, Majeed either missed or ignored the significance of Lumet's offer of help; he only wanted to discuss getting blacks onto the *Q & A* crew. "He didn't seem very knowledgeable about the business," Lumet said later. "I mentioned Steve Ross and Barry Diller; I don't think he had any idea who they were." (When SPY asked if the names Steve Ross and Barry Diller meant anything to him, Majeed replied, "Pete who? What productions?



**Don't shoot until you see the whites standing around holding equipment and getting \$280 a day, plus overtime: the varying levels of white-male domination on the crews of (from top) Arthur Hill's *Married to It*; *Shakedown*, with Peter Weller and Sam Elliott; and Spike Lee's *Mo' Better Blues***





At a ceremony to honor Robert De Niro held at Gracie Mansion this summer, Majeed displays a newfound desire to work from within the film community by eagerly schmoozing with (from top) honoree De Niro, *Cosby*'s Malcolm Jamal Warner, gap-toothed beauty Lauren Hutton, Matt Dillon, Ben Gazzara, host David Dinkins, Ben Vereen and Danny Aiello.

No, I don't know who they are.") Since that tape was made, Majeed has joined Lumet, Keyes, producer Sonny Grosso, actor Mario Van Peebles, and union and city officials to form the Committee for Positive Action, a group whose goal is to put 100 blacks and Hispanics to work in the industry. Perhaps this signals a fundamental change in direction for Majeed.

FOR THE SKEPTIC, THE HARDEST QUESTION IS, *WHAT'S IN IT FOR Majeed?* The answer doesn't seem to be money. Even if he were taking kickbacks from the people for whom he finds work, an allegation for which there is no evidence and that he denies ("I don't ask [for] money... But if they bring a gift or something and say, *Mustafa, here's a necktie, or here's a blueberry pie—I like blueberry pie—here's something for you that*

*my wife baked, well...*"), the amounts involved would be tiny compared with what producers would pay to make him disappear. And on that score, there are no accusations that he's extorting cash from producers, not even from those whom he manifestly annoys. "I haven't heard from anybody that he's ever asked for money," says Pepper O'Brien, deputy commissioner of the Governor's

Office for Motion Picture and Television Development. "In fact, I have heard stories of his being offered money and turning it down."

What's more likely is that Majeed is a man who has found his mission and takes his satisfaction from that. He is, in his own way, a big wheel, capable on any given day of inspiring devotion, contention, fear and concession from glamorous, well-known establishment big wheels. Majeed delights in showing us a tape of his appearance on *The Morton Downey Jr. Show*, where he discussed Islam. He is proud that he has entrée backstage at *The Cosby Show*, can pop into makeup, guest in tow, exchange a robust hello with Lisa Bonet and a whisper and a laugh with Phylicia Rashad, and still be able to speak frankly of how he had to butt heads with Cosby himself. "When he first came here," Majeed recalled, "his production crew was 70 percent white. And I raised hell; I told him I was gonna shut him down. Me and Bill talked and he corrected it. [But] even now, out

of four cameramen, only one is black. The carpenters, right now his carpenters are *all* white."

Majeed feels his work is nowhere near done. "ABC is really doing bad," he tells us as our visit draws to a close, bringing up for the first time the name of what he says is a segregated television network. "I want to check into all of their newsrooms, not only here in America but in London, in France, Tokyo—you know, I really want to open them up. What I feel that I'm gonna have to do is to start a major demonstration against ABC." And not just any demonstration. "Demonstrations that you have seen, you know, outside, across the street, with picket signs—I don't believe in that. I'm not having my people stand outside in the damn cold, or even in the heat. I'm going in the goddamn building, and we gonna *choke* a lot of those damn vice presidents....I would say that the next maybe four months, five months, I'm gonna start setting up to really go and demonstrate against them. I want to make it clear that our demonstration will have a whole lot of people going to jail and going to the hospital. They'll be saying, *Well, uh, vice president John McGillicuddy is not here today. He's in the hospital.*"

We say our goodbyes. Mustafa Majeed offers a final admonition. "Don't forget to tell them how I choked that guy," he says.

Done. ☺









ILLUSTRATION BY WILLIAM CONE

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They're earnest, they're wide-eyed, they're make-believe naive—they're David Byrne, Daryl Hannah, Robin Williams and lots of other rich, powerful grown-ups who should know better. Stop them before they turn America into Never-Never Land.

# **PRESUMED** *innocence*

*"I'm trying to get in touch with the child inside."*

*"I love my toys."*

*"I'm really just a big kid."*

*"I mean, when do I start feeling like a grown-up?"*

*"I'm a child-woman."*

All of these phrases are perfectly acceptable if uttered by someone under 5 years of age. Unfortunately, they are the verbal currency of a creeping,

fashionable subculture, a moonstruck, pabulum-addicted tribe of modern adults whom we may call Naïfs and Waifs. These perennially hopeful human Hummel figurines insist upon combining polar opposites: they truly believe themselves to be innocent *and* rich, successful *and* sensitive. They are the sort of people who make one remember the Ceaușescu with an enduring fondness. Leona Helmsley may be vile and braying, but at least she wears fur.

The Naïf is a child grown tall, an adult pretending a stomach-turning simplicity. The Naïf is button-eyed, gangly David Byrne, silhouetted against a robin's-egg-blue sky in his 1986 film *True Stories*. Dave directed this arch, precious pseudodocumentary, in which he plays a nameless narrator who drops by an imaginary Texas town crammed with cooingly harmless eccentrics—a man who advertises for a wife, a compulsive liar, a rich woman too lazy to get out of bed—all presented as sexless, defanged kitsch, as pixilated windups from Dave's toy chest. Dave joins these winsome bumpkins in the town's "Celebration of Specialness." In his many other projects, Dave has been introducing us to folk art, native Brazilian percussion and indigenous African ditties, just as the Mouseketeers used to sample Other Lands to learn about The People and Their Customs. Dave believes in global sweetness, in teaching the world to sing in perfect harmony. Dave first became successful 15 years ago as a disturbing, amusingly tone-deaf geek, bleating songs like "Psycho Killer"; the wealthy, celebrated Dave has steadily mutated toward Naïfdom. He's not a jaded millionaire pop star; he's just a big kid, the designer-outfitted mayor of Naïfville, USA.

Naïfs revere anything that reminds them of childhood, their own or civilization's; they believe in devolution; they yearn for the guileless cradle. Overt sophistication is poison. Wit, or even speech, is suspect—it's what those rotting, underhanded grown-ups do. Michael Jackson is our man-child of the damned. Jackson hangs out only with young midgets, wee folk like Emmanuel Lewis, the

by *Paul Rudnick*

First Naïf, an interstellar children or, even better, latest Gary Coleman—a

genetically engineered ever-tot, a human plaything. Jackson has a private zoo and has had a personal suite at Disney World. He frolics at Cinderella's Castle, shrouded in fedora and surgical mask, buttressed by burly, armed nannies. Jackson craves infancy, the childhood he presumably sacrificed to show biz. A childless 32-year-old who makes ritual pilgrimages to F.A.O. Schwarz seems genuinely macabre—a Norma Desmond scheming for the lead in the Shirley Temple story. Jackson's hit singles sizzle with lust and vengeance, with satanic groupies and gang bloodshed; perhaps



Michael learns of such paganism from his live-in companion, Bubbles the chimp. Apparently terrified of his own fame, Jackson has become a nightmare Naïf, a whispering specter accepting citizenship plaques from the president in the Rose Garden, a surgically reconstituted Cabbage Patch Kid with rights to the Beatles catalog. Paul McCartney may be a Jackson role model; McCartney's meticulously preserved mop top and lollipop anthems such as "Say Say Say" and "Ebony and Ivory" mark him as a Naïf Hall of Famer.

Naïfdom has been infiltrating our consciousness for more than a decade now via the Spielberg-Lucas canon. These two boy moguls have consistently directed and produced children's movies for adults—brightly colored, merchandise-laden matinees for baby-boomers hitting 30 and now 40. Many of these movies are delightful, but they are clubhouse bibles of Naïfdom. Friendship is all, preferably with a stuffed animal that speaks. Women exist only as ponytailed tomboys or distracted moms; and once the day's adventure is over, everyone gets tucked in with a peck on the forehead. One imagines Spielberg and Lucas behind the camera in

ski pajamas and Davy Crockett caps. When Spielberg attempts adult topics, his skills dissolve, as was evident in last year's *Always*, in which he cast Richard Dreyfuss and Holly Hunter—two feisty, Kewpie-ish types—as a romantic duo. Their affair hinged on Dreyfuss's presenting Hunter with a glittering gown: "Girl clothes!" she swooned. Spielberg clearly finds sex yucky; he squirms during the mushy stuff and fiddles with the penknife in the pocket of his overalls.

The Spielberg legacy includes such Naïf-informed works as *Big*, co-written by his sister Anne. In this hugely lucrative movie, a child mistakenly wishes to mature instantly and then quickly realizes the full horror of adulthood, where girls sleep over and people like money. In Rob Reiner's adaptation of Stephen King's *Stand by Me*, the middle-aged narrator plaintively insists, "I never had any friends later on like the ones I had when I was 12. Jesus, does anyone?" Similarly, childhood is tenderly slavered over on television in the 1960s nostalgia derby *The Wonder Years*; and the hero of *Doogie Howser, M.D.* is a 16-year-old doctor, a sprite supposedly more pure than his elderly colleagues.

Naïfdom results from either brain damage or fear of ag-

ing. For baby-boomers, the shrapnel of the sixties youthquake, aging signifies a loss of enchantment: once you're old, E.T. won't talk to you. Naïfs have an equally intense fear of responsibility, of moving from spoon-fed status to something less secure. They militantly maintain that forelock dangling in their eyes, that short-pants pinchability; as long as they're the child, they'll be cuddled. Baby-boomers are often the products of suburbs, of Levittown and Oak Park playpens. These landscaped pastures encourage Naïfdom by concoct-

ing entire communities in service to tykes. Naïfs are the cottage industry of the suburbs; oversized chocolate-chip cookies, extra-large sweatclothes and sneakers allow even the saggiest adult to remain eternally toggled out for the first day of summer vacation.

Spielberg and Lucas have spawned a second generation of filmmakers with distinct Naïf leanings: Tim Burton, David Lynch and Jonathan Demme are all quirky, original, even ghoulish talents, but they tend to trivialize their material. Every small town they invent becomes a haunted Lionel Plasticville village. Their work is more sexual than Spielberg's, but *Batman*, *Twin Peaks* and *Married to the Mob* are all Santa's-workshop whirligigs, painted and distanced, the guesswork of nice



**BIG KIDS**  
clockwise from top, a self-conscious "Howdy-bo!" from David Byrne; Amy Irving "does" the Miss Porter's yearbook (circa 1975); Michael Jackson feeds soul mate-pet Emmanuel Lewis.

## Discover the Child

NAÏF AND

"I'm still the little southern girl from the wrong side of the tracks who really didn't feel like she belonged. That's part of me that not many people have seen as much as I would like them to see" —Faye Dunaway

"[Goldie Hawn] just has a natural desire and ability to seek out joy" —Kurt Russell

"I noticed that some of my drawings as a child had something in common with the art of the Northwest American Indians" —David Byrne

"The last time I felt really loved was two days ago when a friend brought over a tape of a channeler.... The guy was saying that animals are put on earth to show human beings how to love. While I was listening, my two cats jumped up on the chair and snuggled me—they *never* do that. I was projecting love and they felt it and gave it back" —Elizabeth Perkins

"Bill [Cosby] shows you the child that's still in there, and he plays with that" —Denise Nicholas

"I'm kind of this kid from the sticks. This isn't false modesty, but I am really just this kid from Liverpool" —Paul McCartney

"When the baby comes, Steven [Spielberg] will have somebody to share his toys with. And he's got a lot of them"

—Amy Irving on her then husband



boys still puzzled by the perversity of the adult sphere. American movie directors often resemble nerdlings at *Star Trek* conventions, shirts buttoned up high, fixated solely on pop myth. They spin their decoder rings and leave it to Spike Lee, or to Europeans like Stephen Frears (*My Beautiful Laundrette*, *Dangerous Liaisons*) or Pedro Almodovar (*Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown*), to create worlds lacking friendly mutts, tubby sheriffs and matte-shot sunsets.

Manhattan's downtown art park is practically a shrine to Naïfery, or, more precisely, to zillion-dollar amateurism. Under the guise of honesty or innovation, artists substitute untrained clumsiness for talent. Painters like Rodney Alan Greenblat and Kenny Scharf and the late Jean-Michel Basquiat fill canvases with children's-book doodles—Crayola chic. The motifs of primitive and folk art are aped, as if they were somehow more cave-painting elemental, more in touch with timeless Naïfolia truths. Of course, stick figures and smile faces are also easier to draw. Why bother learning to actually sketch or shadow when finger painting is both more naively "honest" and more bankable?

Spalding Gray unspools endless monologues while seated at a card table, recounting his adorably bumbling attempts at, say, a film career or rehabbing a country home. His work lacks the sweep and construction of true theater; it's just Naïf rambling, a mildly hipper outgrowth of Garrison Keillor. It's surely no accident that Gray was tapped to appear in Lincoln Center's recent revival of Thornton Wilder's Naïf Rosetta stone, *Our Town*. Gray played the folksy narrator, the David Byrne of Grover's Corners. Robert Wilson, the P. T. Barnum of 12-hour epic avant-garde performance dreck, employed an autistic child, Christopher Knowles, to sit at a typewriter and peck. Knowles's output was then framed and sold.

Naïfishness has begun to infect any number of inappro-

priate corners. Two-star restaurants provide crayons for their adult customers to color with on paper tablecloths. The tryingly whimsical buildings of architects like Michael Graves (gigantic swans on the roof?) are often referred to as "playful," as if buildings arrived in holiday gift wrap and could be forgotten by New Year's Day. Twenty-one-year-old fashion prodigy Christian Francis Roth charges thousands for his minidresses decorated with fabric M&Ms, yet more crayons and other preschool artifacts. The wunderkind and idiot savant have become culture heroes: Dustin Hoffman's Oscar-winning performance in *Rain Man* allowed autism to become a fetching twinkle, a Jimmy Stewart tic. A relentlessly ingenuous magazine called *Wigwag* has appeared, for a readership that finds *Reader's Digest* veering perilously close to hard-core; *Wigwag* prints mostly folksy tidbits concerning Mister Rogers and prizewinning oversize vegetables (not to be confused with Dustin). Our president, in requesting a "kinder, gentler nation," seems to have taken his cue from the simpering hostesses of *Ding Dong School* and *Romper Room*.

NAÏFS TEND TO BE BOYS, ALBEIT GRAYING ONES, WHILE AGING little girls bullet toward Waifdom, favoring shapeless cotton sundresses, bare feet and shiny cheeks. Sinéad O'Connor, mooning the MTV cameras with eyes that would give Walter Keane pause, is our latest mega-Waif. Sinéad is a soulful tomboy, near-bald and yet achingly poetic, the humorless girl in combat boots who edited the junior-high-school literary magazine (*I think we should do a whole issue on Chernobyl*). Sinéad believes that people shouldn't be so mean; Sinéad chants of loss and despair with the turgid conviction of any Catholic-school outcast. Sinéad's latest album is called *I Do Not Want What I Haven't Got*—an honorable sentiment from anyone who has just gone multiplatinum. Sinéad has a child, a rock-musician husband, a London house and, one presumes, at least one cat. According to interviews, she actually thinks she leads a simple, ordinary life; she's the sort of artist who finds hassles with her ex-manager to be a touching universal theme. Sinéad is just a slip of a lassie, battered by life, a nervy little dandelion confronting Her Majesty's tanks—she's all Waif, right down to her acoustic guitar and graveyard cape. In a recent *Rolling Stone* cover story, her producer agonized, "Does her art always have to come from pain? ... I pray to God she'll be able to make great records when she's happy."

Suzanne Vega is minor-league American Sinéad; she is given to oversize men's fedoras and modern-dance moves; she made her fortune with "Luka," a lyrical top-ten warble about child abuse. Laurie Anderson is a performance Waif, all cowlicks and dimples—she dispenses shards of tired philosophy through a voice-altering harmonizer while taking singing lessons in pursuit of a hit single. Michelle Shocked is a spikier Waif with a Greek sailor's cap—Waifs are big on headgear, which makes their bobbing pumpkin heads seem ever so fragile. These days Waifs crop their defiantly mouse-brown tresses in stark homage to the *Peyton Place* Mia Farrow, spurning the tendrilly, overpermed coronas of such classic 1970s Waif forebears as Carol Kane, Diane Keaton and Amy Irving.

If Naïfdom is a response to male aging, a rejection of daddyhood, Waifery may be a feminist coping mechanism. Feminism, an ideal of equality and female independence, is

## Within—and Smack It

### W A I F T E S T I M O N I A L S

"But inside, I still feel like the 16-year-old who never had a date"

— Lisa Bonet

"I'll go to Toys 'R' Us and just walk through the aisles"

— Janet Jackson

"I think that if all of us did that, looked at the world like we did when we were kids, the world would be a lot happier place"

— Howie Mandel

"Most people don't know me, that is why they write such things, most of which are not true. ... I cry very often, because it hurts"

— Michael Jackson

"I've still got some of those insecurities I had when I was a teenager. I think we all remain the same people we were when we were 18"

— Dennis Quaid

"I'm like a kid playin' with crayons. I love hair, makeup, shoes"

— Dolly Parton

"I feel like a tough little cookie with melting chocolate inside"

— Isabelle Adjani

"I never made pictures for children, but I never lost the child in me"

— Chuck Jones



a terrific notion, but it evidently causes some gals distress — does it mean they can't be *cute* too? Much of the current post-lib generation pursues success and demands power but trembles late at night, huddled in quilts, alone with that Women's Studies syllabus — *Sure I want to be president, but what about boyfriends?* The modern Waif is a fiercely ambitious, often intelligent woman in deep denial and white anklets, saying to herself, *I want it all, but I don't want anyone to catch me at it.*

Waifs abound in the movie industry, where cutthroat women executives favor Beatrix Potter pinafores, lace gloves and pouts, and are never afraid to weep openly while slamming a project into turnaround. Somehow the fearless, who-gives-a-damn crassness of an earlier harvest of dragon dames seems preferable — the Dawn Steels and Sue Mengerses seem rowdier and less compromised than their delicate if no less bloodthirsty

**THE CHILD WITHIN**  
clockwise from left, a Florida teenager in a hot, uncomfortable Shelley Long costume; faux-primitive art by Kenny Scharf; Lisa Bonet hopes she doesn't get her playclothes dirty.



young underlings. Dawn and Sue might charbroil a subordinate's skull, but at least they wouldn't conclude the barbecue by murmuring, *Inside I'm just a little girl.*

There are few Waifs in law or medicine, fields where adult behavior is expected and prized and where baseball caps turned sideways are frowned upon during the workweek. Waifs opt for professions without dress codes, careers that permit matchstick arms flailing beneath billowy men's shirts, à la Melanie Mayron as the fluttery photographer on *thirtysomething*. Joan Didion is the classic Waif journalist, projecting a near-breakdown tremulousness at all times. Joan has been known to stand at a lectern for almost two hours discoursing on her paralyzing dread of public speaking. The profoundly caustic Nora Ephron can also retreat into a frazzled girlishness when convenient; her novel *Heartburn* is Waif Lit, the saga of a betrayed Waif spun into movie-sale gold. The downtown bookshelf is heavy with Waifs, concentrating on tousled, affectless heroines drifting through the sordid loftscapes of Tama Janowitz and Mary

WHEN NAÏFS AND WAIFS SAY ...	WHAT THEY REALLY MEAN IS ...
"I'm just a big kid"	"I've abandoned my many children by different unwed spouses"
"These are my toys"	"And Ivana's not getting her hands on any of them"
"I'm a child-woman"	"I'm 45, I have hair down to my waist, and I have Marvin Mitchelson on retainer"
"Sometimes I just like to sit around the house in old clothes"	"It's the servants' day off"
"Children and animals are more open and honest"	"They don't sue or talk to reporters"
"My son/daughter and I are growing up together"	"My son/daughter and I are in therapy together"
"I'm taking time off to stop and smell the roses"	"Joe Franklin won't return my calls"

#### JES' FOLKS—THE NAÏF LECTURE CIRCUIT

Garrison Keillor, rustic Naïf  
Lewis Grizzard, redneck Naïf  
Jimmy Breslin, street Naïf  
Erma Bombeck, dishwasher Naïf  
Jonathan Schell, worrywart Naïf  
Andy Rooney, bigot Naïf

#### NAÏF AND WAIF CAUSES

antifur  
anti-animal cosmetic testing (except for lavender or brown eye shadow)  
recycling (except for CD boxes)  
saving Walden Pond  
Ryan White  
the planet

#### NAÏF AND WAIF FILM FESTIVAL

*Lassie Come Home*  
*Big*  
*American Graffiti*  
*Field of Dreams*  
*Day of the Dolphin*  
*Stand by Me*  
*Dead Poets Society*  
*Rain Man*  
*Starman*  
*It's a Wonderful Life* (even after 50th viewing, still suspenseful)

#### TOO SCARY FOR NAÏFS AND WAIFS

Maurice Sendak  
Sandra Bernhard ("Why does she have to do that?")  
Arnold Schwarzenegger movies ("The violence literally made me sick")  
Prince (except when he sings about God)  
*People* magazine (cheap and ugly unless they're in it)  
SPY ("I think those people are sad")

#### ALL-WAIF CHORALE (PLEASE BRING BERETS AND CLOVE CIGARETTES TO ALL REHEARSALS)

Rickie Lee Jones  
Natalie Merchant  
Edie Brickell  
the Roches  
Stevie Nicks  
Joni Mitchell



### CAST-IRON NAÏFS

Robin Williams  
Mister Rogers  
Willard Scott  
Red Skelton  
Ted Turner

### NAÏF AND WAIF FASHION ROLE MODELS

Joan of Arc  
Jean Seberg as Joan of Arc  
Carol Kane in *Carnal Knowledge*  
Raggedy Ann and Andy  
Howdy Doody  
Dondi  
Doug Henning  
Annie Hall  
Mork

### NAÏF AND WAIF HOLIDAYS

Earth Day  
harmonic convergence  
Hands Across America  
the day John was shot  
the day *Cats* closes

### NAÏF AND WAIF NEWSREEL

November 1990: David Byrne and David Hockney color in pages of the new Andy Warhol coloring book to be sold at auction to save the rain forests  
Early 1991: Steven Spielberg directs Robin Williams in a sequel to *Peter Pan*, called *Hook*

### NAÏF AND WAIF COUPLES

Lisa Bonet and Lenny Kravitz  
River Phoenix and Martha Plimpton  
John Denver and Annie (wrote his wife a platinum-selling love song, then divorced her)  
Steven Spielberg and Amy Irving  
Daryl Hannah and Jackson Browne

### NAÏF AND WAIF ACCESSORIES

#### OLD DAYS

trailing hair ribbon  
newsboy cap  
pants with one suspender  
bare feet  
oversize sweater with holes  
fingerless gloves because it's the Depression

#### NOW

nose ring  
small tattoo on ankle  
Rasta braids falling over eyes  
Converse Hi-tops  
vest over bare skin  
fingerless gloves because it's fun

### WHAT NAÏFS AND WAIFS DO WHEN NO ONE'S WATCHING

have sex with Bubbles  
complain about people who don't speak English  
curse God for not letting them win the Best Supporting Tony/Daytime Emmy/Country Music Association Award  
think about Joan Baez's career and get scared  
put baby on hot plate

### CAUSES NAÏFS AND WAIFS AVOID

prochoice  
partisan politics  
AIDS if it's gay, black, Hispanic or intravenous  
anything career-threatening

### CAST-IRON WAIFS

Sally Field  
Shelley Long  
Shirley MacLaine  
Sissy Spacek  
Shelly Duvall  
Rosanna Arquette

Gaitskill. Alison Poole, the drug-addled, promiscuous protagonist of Jay McInerney's *Story of My Life*, is an intriguing hellion until she turns Waif by revealing the dread Secret Explanation for her wicked ways: Daddy slaughtered her beloved childhood horsey for the insurance money. Waifs generally view themselves as orphans, however—wispy, wistful and, above all, aggressively nonthreatening.

Both Sinéad and Michelle have told the press about their childhoods of nonspecific "abuse"; Michelle has spoken of rape and institutionalization as well. These Gulag reminiscences serve to lend the Waifs' often listless tunes a bogus authenticity—this is Waif bragging, or *my bruises are darker than yours*. Naïf and Waif confessionals proliferate, rescuing the featherweight careers of comedian Louie Anderson, whose recent book, *Dear Dad*, consists of treacly letters to his deceased alcoholic father, and Suzanne Somers, who told all in *Keeping Secrets* (*I'm not just a sitcom bimbo — my family were all drunks!*). Why do they anoint themselves "adult children of alcoholics"? We are fast becoming a nation of Naïfs and Waifs, all too eager to parade our wounds on *Oprah*—the love-me-I'm-dysfunctional syndrome. Absorbing these motley tales makes Naïf-and-Waif co-dependents of us all.

But wait: what's the real evil in all this willed vulnerability, this 12-ton gossamer? Why are Naïfs and Waifs to be shunned, or swatted? Their dishonesty alone is not particularly unusual human behavior; the world is a scary place, and occasionally we'd all like to escape behind a big lumpy turtleneck sweater, a blank diary and a batch of Magic Marker freckles. But Naïfs and Waifs are cowards—they refuse to risk. They want to remain children, and children, while a necessary species, are ultimately bores, mere humans-in-training. Why should anyone covet a limited vocabulary, scabby knees and absent table manners? Why not go whole hog and fetishize Huggies, colic and colorful crib mobiles? Naïfs and Waifs hate elegance and all the sinful pleasures of adulthood—complexity, sex, conversation and tailoring. Real children long to grow up, and for good reason—so they can drink, smoke, gossip, avoid jury duty and deplete the ozone layer. Childhood is not a utopia but a holding pen; the good stuff comes later, when you're ready, when you've earned it. Children look abysmal in evening clothes and are problematic in theaters, restaurants and concert halls; as a rule, children are useless after 4:00 p.m.

Naïfs and Waifs are the most Machiavellian of creatures—everything they do is a smoke screen, a dodge. They lack bravado; they are half-people, unwilling to live full tilt and to decay with style. If one must be a child, be Lolita. Innocence is useful only in court. Big round eyes must be rolled. Annie wasn't a Waif, she was an orphan with balls and an eye for a sugar daddy. Elvis was a ludicrous, pill-popping shell, but at least he didn't install himself at Epcot Center. Madonna is ever-alluring because who can imagine *what* she might want that she hasn't got? Folk art is swell for cultures that have yet to discover perspective. Fretting over one's femininity is acceptable only in transvestites. Even crudeness is preferable to the coy; the Simpsons and the Bundys are not perky primitives, they're unashamed mud-people. Let the Gremlins devour the Ewoks! Naïfs and Waifs, molest yourselves! You have nothing to lose but your bangs. ☛



# TIMES

*Figuring out the subtle distinctions  
between the paper of record's Op and its Ed*

BY HENRY "DUTCH" HOLLAND

The ad, which first appeared earlier this year under the heading SECRETS OF THE TIMES, said, "Arts and entertainment **Reviews** offer points of view from our expert critics — just about the only Times people who are allowed to express opinion in the news pages. And since we want that distinction to be clear, we make reviews *look* different from news articles....The tagline (called a 'kicker') in the upper left corner labels the story a Review...."

## REVIEW OF REVIEWERS

Folksy, well-meaning and, judging from the tone, directed at the children and pets of *New York Times* readers. In any event, if it's intended as advice to people who like to sit at home with the paper and play Find the Review, it's insufficient. There are several other things to look for when searching for "expert criticism" in the *Times*:

1. *Signs of self-indulgence.* Rare in news stories, but not uncommon in contributions from name reviewers. Here is the first paragraph of John Updike's review of Lucy Hughes-Hallett's new book on Cleopatra:

This book, beneath its alluring jacket bedecked with Elizabeth Taylor and Cleopatras of bygone ages and, not the least glamorous, the pale-eyed English author, is a stolid dark green such as I associate with textbooks of first-year college math—analytic geometry and the basic elements of calculus. I know the color well, for I lugged this naked tome, in those days reft of its jacket, with me for over a month, everywhere I went. Amid the shimmering enchantment of Venice, and the grimy reality of Ravenna (that yet enhouses the most marvelous mosaics in Christendom) and the medieval ocher and stony lace of Verona, "Cleopatra: Histories, Dreams and Distortions" sat on my hotel table, waiting for me, jet-lagged or not, to brave another

chapter. And on domestic trips as well, into Manhattan during its monsoon season, to the rural fastnesses of Pennsylvania and even into the dental offices of Boston's fabled North Shore did the volume accompany me, read and yet not completely read, as if I were paddling between its Nile-green covers only a snail's pace faster than an opposing current. I say Nile-green, because this is what must have been intended, but for me it became the color of duty.

The great writer went on from there, but I didn't go with him. Two hundred words and he was still on the cover. Who knows what associations the frontispiece would spark, what seeds for extended Updikian musing the table of contents might...*enhouse*, was it? No; life is too short.

2. *Really silly consistency.* News stories are by their nature formulaic; reviews can be, too. In a single In Short section of the Book Review not long ago, Kathleen Quinn concluded her assessment of a new book on Woody Allen with "Woody, read it and weep"; Carl Sommers summed up *Dave Barry Turns 40* with "Dave, he's a real card"; and Joyce Cohen's evaluation of the long-awaited Sally Jessy Raphaël autobiography ended with "Thanks for sharing, Sally."

3. *Errors.* These, of course, can occur

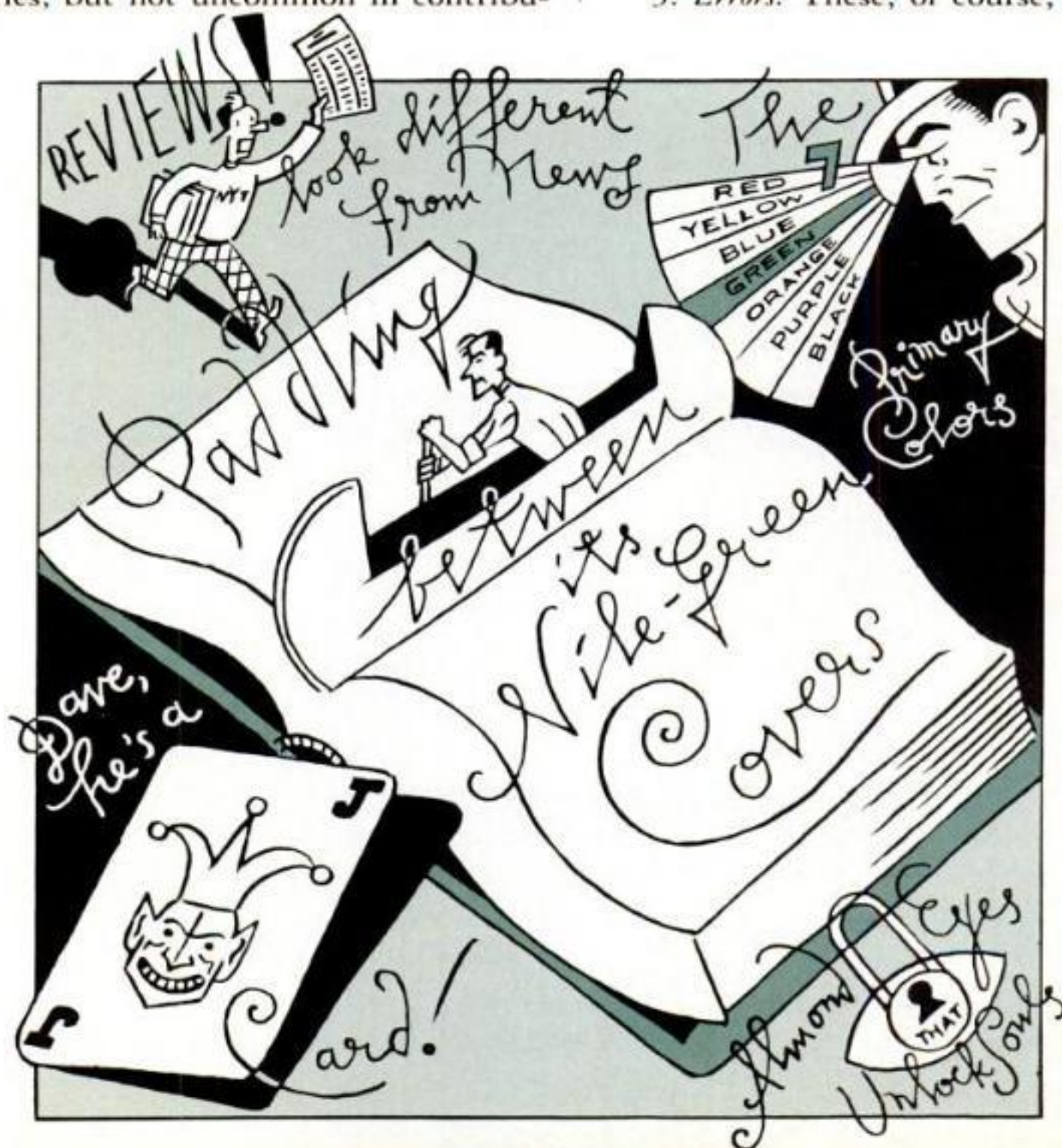


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anywhere, but when they start to pile up in one corner, it's even money you've got a Vincent Canby review on your hands. *Village Voice* movie critic Georgia Brown has suggested that the time I take to scold Canby for his mistakes could be better spent; she's probably right (and she's certainly clairvoyant—more on this later). Nevertheless: in his review of *Back to the Future Part III*, Canby refers twice to "Hill City" (the locale in all three of the movies is Hill Valley); writing about *Another 48 Hours*, Canby fondly remembers a "comedy sequence" from the original movie "in which some small-time hoods hold up the neighborhood bar frequented by off-duty policemen" (the scene actually takes place not in *48 Hours* but in a Chuck Norris movie called *Code of Silence*); and in his review of *Dick Tracy*, Canby describes "the wild little urban boy who tries to steal Tracy's watch" (Tracy gave chase, but it was another man's watch). It makes you wonder what would happen if Canby wandered into something a little more tricky and experimental—like *Pretty Woman IV*.

One final word of advice for those who may want to try detecting *Times* reviews at home: don't be fooled by creative writing elsewhere in the paper. When Robin Finn, for example, files this sort of thing from the French Open—"There is something kaleidoscopic in Gabriela Sabatini's game: it evokes the brilliance of a peacock's plumage, yet it seems always to be searching out new alignments with itself. The patterns shift and churn. [Sometimes] her mind intrudes on her play and hovers over the proceedings like a dark cloud"—the temptation is to call out "Review!" and wave the paper around. But it is not a review. It is Extreme Sportswriting.

More extreme writing, not in the paper of record. Here is critic Matthew Gurewitsch *all over* baritone Dmitri Hvorostovsky: "His potential is boundless. The voice is somber yet sumptuous, like the hues of Rembrandt, noble, red-blooded, as fit for tenderness as for command. The presence is commanding, too. Broad-shouldered, of imposing height, he takes the stage with a conqueror's stately pride. In repose, his countenance impresses with its swelling cheekbones, sensuous mouth, dark hair shot through with metallic early gray,

and almond eyes that unlock souls as they slowly sweep the hall. When he sings, he is more beautiful still, knitting his brows and baring his teeth like a tiger, letting those eyes droop shut in private rapture. Caravaggio would have loved to paint him...." Presumably after having first shoved Rembrandt away from the easel. There's more: "He floods one's being in the sound of his voice. [He] is perfect again: predatory, orchidaceous, demonic." Remarkably, the preceding was not from a supermarket bodice-ripper, but from *Connoisseur*.

Jonathan Schwartz is a good writer with good taste in obsessions: Frank Sinatra, the Boston Red Sox and his late father, the songwriter Arthur Schwartz. It's a safe bet that one of those three will turn up in any given article Schwartz writes, no matter where it is published or what the subject is. This July, for instance, Schwartz delivered an essay on NBC's *Sunday Today*, and the subject was the Red Sox. Or take a glance at his wide-ranging monthly column for *GQ*. In June 1989, Sinatra was mentioned. In August 1989, Schwartz's father was. September 1989, the Red Sox. October 1989, Sinatra. February 1990, Sinatra. April 1990, his father. And in June 1990, the happy reason for all this rehash: Schwartz worked *all three* into the same *GQ* column. Congratulations are hereby extended, and also the sincere wish to someday see the three great Schwartzian allusions captured in a single paragraph—or even (I can dream) a single sentence.

A *Times* ad promising to send interested readers "more great reviews for *Dick Tracy* as they appeared in newspapers like the *Toronto Sun*, *Boston Globe*, *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*" and so on if they wrote to an address in Burbank proved impossible to resist, and the packet, when it arrived, didn't disappoint. The North American film-critic community may have been divided on some aspects of *Dick Tracy*, but they were nearly unanimous about one thing: that the movie was shot in primary colors. There have always been just three primary colors—red, yellow and blue—yet several critics referred to "the seven primary colors." (John Urbancich, who writes for Cleveland's *Sun Press*, came closer to the truth; he counted six.) Among those quick to praise the movie's "primary

color" scheme (red, yellow, blue, green, orange, etc.): *Newsweek's* David Ansen, *New York's* David Denby, Gannett News Service's Jack Garner, NBC-TV's Gene Shalit, and both Siskel and Ebert. Could all these fellows really have relied, Suzy-like, on the production notes, in which production designer Richard Sylbert made this mistake?

Best of all, mailing away for the *Tracy* reviews introduced me to the work of Richard E. Rotman, a critic for *Metropolis* magazine in Toronto. Rotman discussed the movie in the form of an open letter to Warren Beatty. A brief excerpt: "Some people said you didn't have it anymore, that it was over for you after *Ishtar*. But you trounced them, didn't you? You produced, directed *and* starred in a summer blockbuster, and one of the best ones to come along in a long time. Can Spielberg or Lucas do that? Or Hoffman or Pacino or any of those diehard action directors? No, sir...Your performance [is] the finest of a long and successful career...Great Warren! You did it!" Warren? *You owe Rotman a letter.*

For reasons that have nothing—well, very little—to do with Richard E. Rotman, this is my last outing as Reviewer of Reviewers. My friend Pendlebury has persuaded me to become involved in his export business, Gewgaws Limited (Miniature Eiffel Tower Division), and I see great promise in the venture. Beginning next month, readers of this column will be in the sure hands of my colleague Humphrey Greddon. (My only advice to Humphrey: regarding the Scribe of *GQ*, don't even try—*let Merkin be Merkin.*) Looking back at my year and a half on the beat, I think I can point to a feeble few successes. By my count, the *Times's* Stephen Holden has used *urgency* or *urgent* only twice since last November, when his slavish devotion to the two words was pointed out here. *Rolling Stone's* Peter Travers, who in his prime could find something nice (and alliterative) to say about *any* movie, is now so filled with bile that a semiregular sidebar called Stinkers has been added to his increasingly negative reviews to catch the overrun. And as far as I know, Clive Barnes of the *New York Post* hasn't written theater criticism in the character and voice of George Bernard Shaw in well over a year.

Of course, it might just be coincidence. ☺



# UN-BRITISH CROSSWORD ANSWERS

## ACROSS

7. I have been trying to think of an example of a single great foot. Maybe this, Adam and Eve packed into one spondee in *Paradise Lost*: "One flesh." Here, from Shakespeare's *Henry V*, is an example of a great pair of feet: "The game's afoot." Gains something from the context, of course, but Sherlock Holmes was always quoting it.

10. A compass is a *range*, coming after *est*.

11. Mark Strand is a great name for a poet. It may suggest something that will wash away, but then images of impermanence often last. Keats's "Here lies one whose name was writ in water" is carved on his tombstone. Longfellow's "footprints on the sands of time," though plodding, has legs.

15. As in "Hot diggity dog!" Understand is *dig*, soldier is *GI* and Cobb is *Ty*.

17. Fish eggs are *roe*, a thousand is *K*, in *the*.

25. The pig in E. B. White's *Charlotte's Web* was named Wilbur. Richard Wilbur was the second American poet laureate.

26. The sound ("if you're listening") of *chord* and *would*.

27. To avoid is to skirt, and *skirt* is an offensive term for a woman.

28. *Alarmed Ma* rearranged ("somehow").

## DOWN

1. If there had been a poet laureate when Robert Frost was alive, he would undoubtedly have been it. (He did hold the post of poetry consultant to the Library of Congress in 1958.) Not only was he a major poet, but people had heard of him. If the office were an elective one, he might be unbeatable still.

2. Robert Penn Warren.

4. Howard Nemerov.

5. Little Richard's hit "Long Tall Sally" was followed by "Short Fat Fannie" in

1957. It got up to No. 5 on the charts. Larry Williams also sang "Bony Moronie." Those were the days—lewdness with discretion.

14. *Lime rickeys* without *ey*. Maybe I could be limericist laureate. So far I have specialized in limericks involving names of southern towns:

A poker-faced man in Mobile,  
When women ask, "How do you feel?"  
Will only say, "Well,  
I ain't gonna tell.  
Who says that is part of the deal?"

A couple in Pompano Beach  
Believed so in freedom of speech,  
They'd bring up each other's—  
And his or her *mother's*—  
Failings, and holler and screech.

A foolish old fellow in Raleigh  
Spends day after day singing "Polly...  
Doodle all day"  
In a vexatious way—  
Always omitting the "Wolly."

A man in Tallahassee  
Feels that it's not very classy,  
Inserting one's nose  
Into strange people's clothes,  
Unless, of course, one is Lassie.

A high-handed lass in Eufaula  
Greeted a gentleman calluh  
With this salutation:  
"For your information,  
We're having a baby, named Paula."

A man you may know in Sewanee  
Likes just Marie Osmond, not Donny:  
"She's *really* genuine.  
He'd bring you the menu in  
A fern bar, all hey-nonny-nonny."

I guess the political content of these limericks is not very clear. As laureate, I would expand into other regions of the country and try to be dirtier and more inspirational. ☺



# TV OR NOT TV?

A sequel to last year's sad, zany  
report from inside the Museum of

Broadcasting



When last we looked in on the Museum of Broadcasting ("We Are Experiencing Technical Difficulties," September 1989),

MoB president Robert Batscha's routine executive burdens—currying favor with trustees, flattering donors, fret-

ting over table settings for museum parties—had been compounded by the demands of choosing among carpet swatches and lighting fixtures for the new Philip Johnson building the museum was scheduled to occupy this fall. Alas, the word now circulating among employees is that the capital campaign is millions of dollars behind schedule and the grand opening will be delayed once again. But Batscha, despite both his disappointment at this and his apoplexy over the SPY article (see below), is pushing ahead with the museum's transformation. Having dealt with vital cosmetic issues, he is now applying the full weight of his presidential attention to a subject that has only rarely, if ever, concerned him in the past: museum exhibitions. He has made it clear to the curatorial staff that he wants the new building to open with splashy exhibitions that will afford him media exposure more glamorous than the mostly nickel-and-dime radio and cable-television appearances he's accustomed to.

"I want," Batscha said at one staff meeting, gravely issuing marching orders, "I want Van Gogh on the radio."

It was vintage Batscha, combining an



almost complete innocence of the history of broadcasting with a secondhand sense of what passes for culture among the Upper East Side crowd he claws after—and with no possibility that he might be embarrassed by either attribute. In fact, so shameless is Batscha in pursuing the sort of social status accorded the presidents of more prestigious institutions that he regularly sends museum press releases to the enviably exclusive home addresses of his little son Eric's Dalton School classmates.

Batscha was thus quite preoccupied last fall in the aftermath of SPY's look at his administration of the museum Bill Paley founded in 1975 for the preservation of television and radio history. Underlings often use the word *Nixonian* to describe Batscha—his jowls, his ghastly attempts at appearing to be a regular guy, his relentless sense that someone, somewhere, is insulting him—and his reaction to the unflattering article was indeed reminiscent of the former U.S. president in his heyday.

Confronted in print with what might in another circumstance have been called a cancer on the presidency (a dysfunctional catalog system, a vault clogged with boxes of decaying kinescopes, a staff driven to mutiny), Batscha took a sanguine official stand and tried to lend the article's accusations all the significance of a third-rate break-in. But in private he responded with an exculpatory letter to every museum trustee, trying to convince a board that included 20th Century Fox chairman Barry Diller, Creative Artists Agency chief Michael Ovitz and CBS president Laurence Tisch that he, Batscha, wasn't incompetent, or contemptuous of the public, or cynically indifferent to the popular culture that his museum exists to preserve. But he soon discovered he was putting too fine a point on things. Trustee Steven Bochco actually congratulated Batscha on the publicity and told him not to worry, as a thrilled Batscha recounted for weeks afterward.

Still, with a board-of-trustees meeting approaching, Batscha ventured into the now seminatorious MoB tape vault for an inspection tour. (The ruinously neglected vault, a focus of the SPY article, houses the museum's collection.) Although it was still nearly impassable, cluttered with boxes of unprocessed videotapes and littered with shattered,

mostly irreplaceable radio discs, conditions in the vault didn't truly stir Batscha until he came across...*a half-hidden beer can*. Staffers were nearly as shocked by Batscha's shrieking over this discovery as they were by the novelty of his concern with anything remotely curatorial. Quickly they were set to shipping boxes off to storage and hiding them in closets and under desks elsewhere in the museum. Batscha himself, working with the desperate fervor of a man who thinks he is saving his job, stayed late into the night putting the finishing touches on the vault, where he had earlier been yelling at employees to scrape gum off the floor. But his honest labor went unappreciated: the temporarily pristine vault failed to attract the attention of the trustees, who had better things to do than actually inspect conditions at a museum entrusted to their care.

Those MoB staffers who cherish the Batscha-is-Nixon formulation reveled in the museum president's obsession with leaks after the SPY article appeared. Batscha's own amateur plumbing operation included encouraging his assistants to listen in on conversations, devoting management meetings to combing lists of MoB personnel for likely suspects, and phoning former employees to accuse them (mistakenly) of being sources for the story.

One of Batscha's corrective measures recalled a more recent Republican administration. *I've ordered a paper shredder*, he informed his assistants. *Now get to work*. Having needlessly worried aloud last summer that the article would detail the expenses he ran up during the museum's annual festival in Los Angeles, where a flashy Four Seasons Hotel suite is his home away from home, Batscha now hectored his staff to shred, shred, shred. The project ran out of gas before the mountainous nine-year accumulation of Batschanalia was entirely devoured. Nevertheless, quite a few records (directives ordering curators to use only *parts* of grants that were intended to be entirely theirs, copies of Batscha's letters to Paley begging to have his handsome salary—estimated to be \$100,000—increased) were reduced to half-inch strips and stuffed into garbage bags that were borne out of the building by trustworthy underlings rather than be left for a potentially inquisitive cleaning crew.

Anyone who bothered to ask about the frantic shredding was told that the old files weren't "worth moving" to the new building.

Many staffers won't be making the move, either. With a pay scale and a turnover rate comparable with those of an Arby's franchise, the museum has seen six radio and television curatorial staffers leave since late last year.

A more unusual personnel story surfaced last winter in the Bronx, of all places, when it was revealed that the man who had been the museum's treasurer for the past two years, David Weidler, had been fired from his previous job as an executive with the New York Yankees. The reason, according to owner George Steinbrenner, was that Weidler had for his own profit sold bats and balls intended for giveaway promotions (a charge Weidler now denies). Thus, the next six months saw weary MoB employees having to explain to potential donors that yes, theirs was indeed *that* Dave Weidler; that yes, a man whose supposed greed had allegedly offended even George Steinbrenner was now overseeing the museum's finances. This past July,

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Weidler resigned. More than one staff member was grimly amused by the official explanation that Weidler had left because he was uncomfortable working in the nonprofit sector of the economy.

Weidler departed during a week that also saw a radio engineer quit and a fundraiser fired—not an unusual bloodletting for the museum, but one that alarmed a recently hired researcher who later approached management to suggest that maybe something ought to be done to bolster staff morale. Which promptly caused him to be fired.

Things have recently been enlivened for employees who have managed to stick it out. On rollicking Friday afternoons staff members, clutching their meager paychecks, race to a nearby Bank of New York. The challenge—the game—is to see who can get his paycheck cashed before the museum's own bank, as has happened on several occasions of late, refuses to honor any more checks drawn on the MoB account. *We're so sorry. Please try again Monday*, the turned-away have been told (or words to that effect).

There has been some good news: the museum somehow ponied up the money to restore 5 out of 35 *Ed Wynn Show* kinescopes that were turning to dust last summer on the vault floor (the other 30 were unsalvageable). But even this hasn't persuaded staff members that Batscha is actually interested in having the collection curated. They are, perhaps, dispirited that the word *backlog* has been added to the museum's curious list of banned words and phrases (*golden age* has long been barred, because Batscha fears that check-writing broadcasters might grow testy at the implication that the golden ages of radio or television might not be right this minute). Thanks to this latest edict, the tape vault's mountains of uncataloged, virtually unusable programs—some 19,000 at last count—are now referred to as the museum's *archives* (as opposed to the cataloged, and smaller, *collection*). More recently, in a development that attests to the growing power and philanthropic potential of cable-television operators, another word has been prohibited. *Broadcasting* itself may no longer be mentioned at the museum of the same name. ☺

IN-YOUR-

FACE

## LIBERALISM

*And the role of poetry*

*and flaggot jokes*



BY ROY BLOUNT JR.

Browsing in Books & Co., I run into Mark Strand, the poet, and we say hello. Maybe my own verses tend to run along

THE UN-  
BRITISH  
CROSSWORD  
PUZZLE

lines like these: "Sitting drinking naked in a cheap motel/Sharing our last Merit and a can of Bud—/Where is all that

magic that you wove so well?/Where is all the fun we had when you were with HUD?" But I am not unacquainted with poets. After all, maybe someday I will write a great poem myself. Or anyway a great line, or at least a couple of 7 Across.

Then what do I read in the paper? Mark Strand was named poet laureate! Of the nation! I know our poet laureate!

My next thought is, *Maybe I could be poet laureate*. Why not? I'd be happy to do what the ones we've had so far have mostly refrained from doing: I'd write poems commemorating national occasions.

It's April 15th! Now I'm someone who owns A piece of a whole lot of savings and loans. Though what I've put in doesn't give me a plus, Each thrift malefactor was just one of us.

*Would it be tasteless to run for poet laureate*, I'm wondering.

Then something else crosses my mind. There's a little bit of government money attached to the laureateship, I gather. NEA money. I'd probably have to sign a pledge that none of my poetry would be obscene.

Bummer. Because frankly, I'm hoping that being laureate would help me

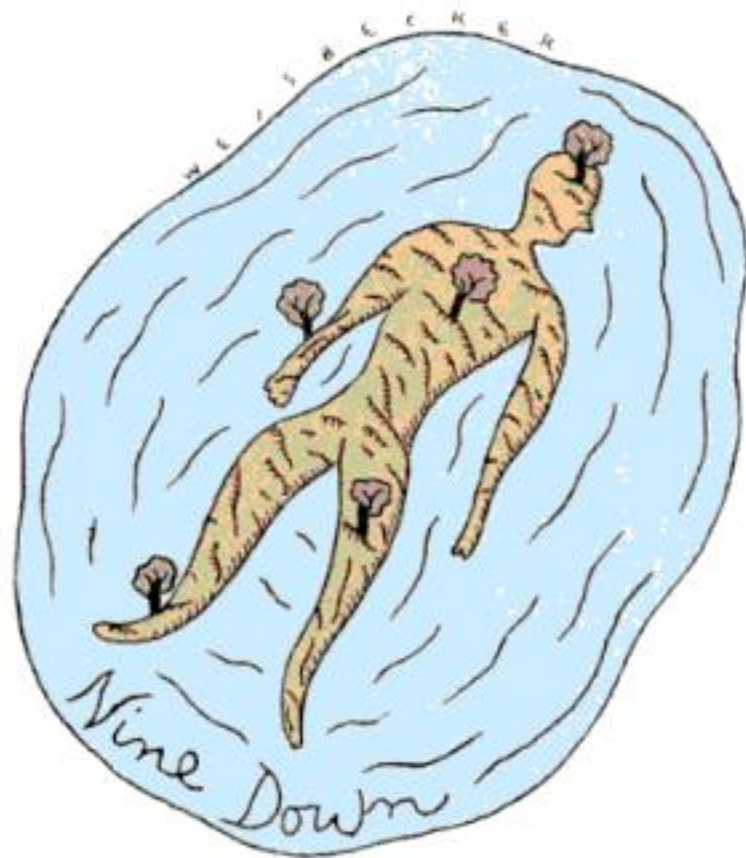


launch something long overdue. A liberal counteroffensive.

When it comes to gut issues like flag love and censorship, reactionaries lately are taking all the lurid advantages. Wave Old Glory *and* pictures of flag conflagration. Invoke the (threatened) innocence of American children *and* spew (other people's) dirty lyrics. Ride turgid waves of pride *and* disgust, valor *and* paranoia. While liberals shuffle their feet and appeal to...reason.

Like I say, I'm thinking of mounting a counteroffensive. Funky liberalism. In-your-face liberalism. Liberalism that's into kicking asses and calling names.

People who wrap themselves in the flag, go all mushy over it, threaten the Bill of Rights in its name—I'm thinking of calling these people flaggots. Start telling flaggot jokes. Two flaggots sit-



ting in a hot tub, one of them says, "You know what I heard? I heard these liberals favor using the flag as a *snot rag*."

"That's nothing," says the second one. "I heard they favor flag *toilet* paper. I heard they favor using the flag to clean between their *toes*. I heard there's a woman in New York that doesn't ever shave or wash any part of her body, and she lies down on a filthy stage buck naked and puts a flag up her *business*. On the *stage*, in —"

"Uhh, Howard?"

"—in New York. Yeah?"

"Would you put your hand over my heart?"

"Like this?"

"And tell me all that again, only slower?"

And see, if I were poet laureate, I wouldn't have to hem and haw all mealy-mouthed about how, gee whiz, even dumb, obnoxious free speech needs to be protected. I could jump right in with *liberal* rap songs:

Better get back, my narrow-minded friend,  
I am a liberal M-A-N.  
Fuck these racist and sexist jokes;  
I like all kind of *other* kind of folks.  
Tell you the thing about 2 Live Crew:  
They're just scared of what a woman can do.  
And as for Senator Jesse, Hell...  
He must think tobacco don't smell.  
But he's got a right to be a dumb peckerwood,  
And 2 Live Crew got big peckers?  
Good.  
This land has room for them, and others'.  
Incidentally, how 'bout their mothers?  
The awkward truth of the matter, in fact,  
Their mamas might rather catch Jesse's act.  
Mamas don't like to hear 2 Live Crew  
Running down women — well, maybe *theirs* do.  
Say your mama is a masochist? Hey,  
That's her right, in the USA.  
And as for Jesse, well, he's so prim,  
His mama musta kept a *grip* on him.  
But that's all right, it takes all kinds.  
So let's all try to change each other's minds.

A liberalism as nasty as it wants to be.

## ACROSS

.....

7. Colossal pedal extremities greet fate, slippin' and a slidin'. (5,4)

8. Stir broth to beat. (5)

10. Alienate compass, following mind-control group. (8)

11. Beach poet. (6)

12. Turn back arms and get cozy. (4)

13. Sandwich with an honest look. (4-4)

15. Put this in hot dog for intensification — understand, soldier Cobb? (7)

17. Poet has fish eggs (a thousand) in the... (7)

20. ...malice that gets poet Sexton in mess. (8)

22. Narrative sounds terminal. (4)

25. White pig was second laureate. (6)

26. Three or more tones together would — if you're listening — become stacked logs. (8)

27. Avoid woman offensively. (5)

28. Sky the Beatles sang about alarmed Ma somehow. (9)

## DOWN

.....

1. Poet's rime. (5)

2. Late laureate houses rabbits. (6)

3. Below-standard performance is not on, wild thing. (3,5)

4. Up-and-coming men rove erratically for laureate. (7)

5. "\_\_\_\_\_ Fannie," sang Larry Williams —

in contrast to Little Richard's Sally. (5,3)

6. Confection by Ezra? (5,4)

9. "I will" spoken briefly on small body of land. (4)

14. Five-line comic verses would be fizzy citrus drinks if not for losing, 'ey? (9)

16. Poet Allen begins oddly and small growl arises. (8)

18. Get behind under irregular tout and exceed (some-one) at short-fingered vulgarian's game. (8)

19. Nongregarious at a party. (7)

21. Become entitled to vase, we hear. (4)

23. Owe three fifties, perhaps, to author of *Lord Weary's Castle*. (6)

24. "Imaginary gardens with real \_\_\_\_\_ in

them" — Marianne Moore. (5)

Answers appear on page 74.



# PARTY poop



Finally, X-Ray Spex that really work! And the first guy in town to have a pair of the magic glasses is none other than billionaire Milton Petrie, here seen gazing across the ballroom of The Pierre.

Demonstrating a bit of lingering *Arachnophobia* fever, Mary Tyler Moore entertains fellow galagoers with a perky rendition of "Eensy Weensy Spider."



**FLAT FEET** Why are producer Lester Persky, former Kennedy

moll Angie Dickinson and jilted husband Francis Kellogg grimacing? Maybe because forever-young, aptly named newspaper heiress Bubbles Rothermere is standing on their toes.

**MAMA'S BOY** (1) Second son and failed mayoral candidate Ronald Lauder

**SAY "AAAH"** Hilarious as ever, former telethon emcee Jerry "The Day the Clown Cried" Lewis treats his wife, Sandra, to a very special, extra-personal version of the "I Love You This Much" message.



loves accompanying

**GONNA FLY NOW** (1) At a bal-

let fundraiser, last year's most notorious dwarf zillionaire, Saul Steinberg, glances across the dance floor at this year's most notorious dwarf zillionaire, Henry Kravis, and shoots him a look that says, *Can you believe that these two tall, beautiful women* [Steinberg's wife, Gayfryd, and Nina Griscom] *are dancing with guys like us?* (2) Below left, Steinberg then charms the crowd by breaking into his famous "Rocky" dance, a step he may have picked up while at Philadelphia's Wharton School of Business and that he has successfully taught to the city's other flamboyant charity-gala fixtures, such as Ivana Trump (3), here doing the Rocky while her obliging partner, jewelry merchandiser Kenneth Jay Lane, stands perfectly still.



**HE'S BACK!** It's our favorite fossil-escort, Walter

Stane, but this time he's got a new, shiny, more-head-hugging-than-ever rug and a new, well-preserved date, Palm Beach singer-philanthropist Celia Lipton Farris.







**MOUSEBURGERS WELL-DONE** (1) At the 25th-anniversary celebration of editor Helen Gurley Brown's reign at *Cosmopolitan* at the Rainbow Room, Brown poses with three other strenuously self-satisfied *Cosmo* girls, Beverly Sills, Barbara Walters and Liz Smith—combined age, 250! (2) Brilliant, fearsome, hearty-partying Fox despot Barry

Diller, perhaps hinting that he'd like to be asked to be a centerfold, strikes a fetching pose in the receiving line. (3) Don Johnson, eyes open and dressed as a 1930s gangster, participates in a photo opportunity with Revlon owner Ron Perelman and Brown, and briefly wonders why he came. (4) Brown does the customary "Swift dip," scrunching herself down so as to be head-to-head with the itty-bitty agent Irving Lazar.

**WHOSE IS BIGGER?** At a benefit for the Dance Theatre of Harlem, Ivana Trump and fellow socialite Judy Peabody face off to see who has the highest hair.



**THE HUNK IN HELL** John F. Kennedy Jr. surrounded by paparazzi at Andrew "Rat-face" Cuomo's bachelor party.

(2) except when she pays attention to anyone else.



**FACE OFF** (1) As pointy-eared grande dame Martha Graham lapses into a momentary restorative trance, her younger doppelgänger, no-underwear buff Bianca Jagger, studies the older woman for tips on how to perfect her own look of pinched elegance. (2) At the Night of 100 Stars at the Hilton, a photographer for the first time records Liz Smith's extraordinary knack for celebrity chameleonism—here, as she lurks for just a moment behind America's most revered newsman, Smith's face suddenly and uncannily rearranges itself into a fair approximation of Walter Cronkite's.



At a Hollywood party for *Total Recall*, confessional author and former substance abuser Drew Barrymore, 16, makes it clear that she really is all cleaned up and ready to act like a grown-up.





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# Marlboro


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